

TAKING TALES.

Instructive and Entertaining Reading,

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THE MILLER OF HILLBROOK.

CHAPTER I.

THERE are all sorts of mills: some go by water, undershot or overshot; but if the millpond is dry, or the stream runs low, they come to a standstill. They want help, they must have water, to go on. Next there are steam-mills, which make a great noise and do a great deal of work; but they want coals and water too: if both are not brought to them, they stop and can do nothing. And then there are wind-mills; but everybody knows that wind-mills, though they do stand on the tops of hills, in spite of their great long arms stuck out, are of no use if the wind does not blow. So a man may try to do a great deal of work; but if he tries to get on without the help of his neighbours, and without being willing to help them in return, he will soon find that he too has to come to a standstill. Yes, young or old, rich or poor, must all help each other. Once there came on earth a great Person, great though poor, a carpenter's son. He only stayed a short time, but all that time He went about doing good to men, helping His fellows; and He died that He might help all men still more, and in a way no other person

could have helped them. He came to die, because all men have sinned. He came also to show men how to live—how to act one towards another.

MARK PAGE, the Miller of Hillbrook, owned a wind-mill on the top of a knoll just above the village. His house and sheds for his carts and horses stood below it, and round it were some fields which were his ; so it will be seen that he was well to do in the world. He had a wife and a son and a daughter, and he ought to have been a happy man ; but he was not. Things seemed never to go quite right with Mark. Either there was too much wind, or too little wind. If there was little wind he was sure to cry out for more, but once ; and then he would have given his mill and his house and fields to have got the wind not to blow. About that I will tell by-and-by.

Sometimes the miller sang—

“ When the wind blows,
Then the mill goes :
When the wind drops,
Then the mill stops.”

But he was wont to growl out, “ The wind is sure to drop when I have most grist to grind—just to spite me.”

Hillbrook was a nice spot. There was the brook which ran out of the hill, fresh and pure, right through the village. There was not water enough to turn a mill, but enough to give the people right good water to drink and to cook with. It is a sad thing not to have good water. Bad water, from ponds, or ditches, or wells near drains, makes many people ill,

and kills not a few. The people of Hillbrook prized their good water. They said, "we have good water and pure air, and now what we have to do is to keep our cottages clean and we shall be well." They did keep the floors and the walls of their cottages clean, but somehow fevers still came. At times, when the sun was hot, many people were ill : no one could tell how it was.

There was a farm to let, called Hillside farm. No one would take it, for it was said that the land was cold and wet, and too open. At last one Farmer Grey came to see it. The rent was low, the terms fair ; "I'll take it on a long lease," he said ; "and if God wills it, ere many years go by, it will yield good crops." Farmer Grey soon gave work to many hands, he paid good wages too, and was always among his men to see that each man did his proper work. He put deep down in the ground miles and miles of drain pipes, it was said.

Hillside was next to the Mill farm. When Mark Page saw the tons and tons of dung of all sorts, chalk, and guano, which comes from over the sea, put on the land, he said that Farmer Grey had put more gold on it than he would ever get out of it. Farmer Grey said, "Bide a bit, neighbour, and we shall see."

Farmer Grey heard some people one day talk about their good water and fine air and clean cottages, and yet that fevers came to the place. So he went into the village, and walked from cottage to cottage : "Look here, what is this hole for?" he

asked one ; “I must hold my nose while I stand near it. Why it’s just under the room where some of you sleep!” “Oh, that’s just a hole where we empty slops, and throw in cabbage stalks and dirt of all sorts,” said the good woman ; “we take it out sometimes to spread on the garden.” “Now hear me, dame,” said Farmer Grey, “that hole is just a nest sure to hatch a fever some day ; drain it off, fill it up, and dig a new one at the end of the garden, and take care that none of the drainings run into your brook.”

“Why is this green ditch close under your window, dame ?” he asked of another. “Why you see, farmer, it is there, it has always been there, and it’s so handy just to empty the slops and such-like dirt,” said the dame ; “to be sure it does smell bad sometimes, but that can’t be helped.” “Hear me, dame,” said Farmer Grey, “I have a notion that God lets bad smells come out of such muck just to show us that if we breathe them they will do us harm ; the bad air which comes out of the muck mixes with the air we are always taking into our insides, and that makes us ill. You had one child die last summer of fever, and one is now ill. Now just do you get your good man to drain that off when he comes home, and tell him that he need not come to work till after breakfast to-morrow, or noon, if he has not done it.”

In another cottage a drain full of filth ran right under the floor. A cesspool was close to a fourth cottage. In several the floors were clean ; but all sorts of filth had dropped through and stayed there, and when it rained the water ran under the floor. “Just lift

up a plank," said Farmer Grey; it was done, and he stuck his stick into a foot or more of black mud.

"Bad air—gas it is called—comes out of that stuff. That's what brings fevers and kills the children," he said. "Oh, my friends, you must get rid of all these things if you wish to have health." The people in Hillbrook liked Farmer Grey; they knew that he wished them well, and the wise ones did what he told them. The cholera at last came to England. No one was ill in those cottages near which the cess-pools and green ditches and dirt holes had been filled up; but five or six died in the cottages where they were left, and the stuff from them mixed with the water they drank. Then people saw that Farmer Grey was right.

Somehow Mark Page did not like him, nor did Mistress Page, his wife, nor his son, young Ben Page; they all spoke an ill word of him when they could. Only Mary Page, of all in the house, would never do so. Mary was not like the rest in the miller's house, she was sweet and kind. She had been to a school where she had learned what was good and right, and what God loved her to do. Mark Page said that the water which ran off Farmer Grey's land came on to his and did it harm. "I can prove it," he said. "Once my crops were as good as any which grew on that land. Now look you here, his crops are as fine as you would wish to see, and mine are not half as good. I'll see if I can't turn the water back again." Farmer Grey wished to make a road through his farm, and over some wild land, where, in winter, the

carts often stuck fast. There was no lack of gravel, but he had of course to drain the ground, and then by just making the road round—that is, the middle higher than the sides—the water ran off on both sides, and the road was as hard as stone.

“Ah! ah! see, Farmer Grey has sent the water which used to remain quiet on the top of the hill right down over my land, just to make his own road, as if a road was of use up there,” said Mark Page. “I’ll be revenged on him some day, that I will.” These words were told to Farmer Grey. “Will he?” he said; “Then I will heap coals of fire on his head, and try which will win the day.” “What can he mean?” asked one or two of those who heard him: “That’s not like how Farmer Grey is wont to speak. Does he mean that he will burn his house over his head?”

No, no; Farmer Grey did not mean that. He meant that he would do so many kind acts to Mark Page that he would soften his heart. These words are in the Bible. In the land where the Bible was written by God’s order, when people want to soften any hard meat, they put it into a pot with a top and put the pot into a hole full of hot coals, and then they pile more hot coals over the top, so that all parts of the pot are hot; so that to heap coals of fire on a man’s head has come to mean, to soften his heart by many kind deeds—heaping them upon his head.

Mark Page did not know what a kind man Farmer Grey was. The miller had a man to help in the

mill, Sam Green by name. There is a saying, "Like master, like man." Sam was very like the miller—may be worse. Sam was a man of few words, the miller did not speak much—young Ben was like his father. One night the talk was about the new road. "Why not go and dig it up?" asked young Ben Page. "Best thing to do," growled out Sam Green. It was moonlight, so they all three went out with spades and picks to the road. "Where shall we dig, father?" asked Ben. The miller looked about; his farm was on the left of the road. "Stop these two or three drains here," he said, as he struck his spade on the left side. "But it seems to me that most of the water runs to the right, off into the brook; still I don't see what cause Farmer Grey had to go and make this road." The next day, Farmer Grey rode by and saw where the drains had been stopped. He might have known who did it. He said not a word, but sent a man to put them to rights.

CHAPTER II.

THE more harm the miller tried to do to James Grey, the more he wished to do. When he could, he or Ben or Sam let his cows into the farmer's fields; and much mischief they did. Ben, too, who might often be met with a gun in his hands, shot the farmer's game, and his rabbits and pigeons.

One day, a fine dog the farmer was very fond of, came into one of Mark Page's fields. Mark had a

gun in his hand, and shot the dog. Farmer Grey met Mark soon after this.

“You shot my dog, Trust, I am told,” said the farmer.

“Your dog came after my rabbits,” said Mark.

“Friend, did I say one word to man or boy when your son not only came to my fields, but shot well-nigh half a score of my rabbits and my hares?” asked the farmer. “You know he came.”

“I shoot all dogs that come to my fields,” said Mark, walking on, with his eyes on the ground, and a frown on his brow. He did not speak much that day when he got home. In the evening there was a breeze, and the mill went round and round quite rapidly. “I’ll not give in,” he said to Sam Green, as they sat on the steps of the mill, while the grist they had just put in was grinding. “Hold on to the last; that’s what I say. Farmer Grey wants to come it strong over me; but I’ll not let him.”

“All right, master; stick to that,” said Sam Green.

“So I will. He shan’t come it over me; that he shan’t,” growled the miller.

“‘When the wind blows
Then the mill goes;
When the wind drops,
Then the mill stops.’”

“‘I care for nobody—no, not I,
If nobody cares for me.’”

“That’s it, master; that’s what I call the right thing; just proper pride,” said Sam, the miller’s man.

Poor Ben Page had a poor chance of being well brought up by such a man as Mark Page, with such a friend as Sam Green. Mrs. Page, too, his mother, did not know how to teach him what was right, for she did not care to do what was right herself. She just did what she liked best, not what was right. She ought to have known, for she had her Bible, and time to read it; but she did not read it, neither Sundays nor weekdays.

If we read the Bible only on Sunday, we pass more than three hundred days each year, on which days we do not learn what we ought to do in this life, or how we are to go to heaven.

Mary read her Bible every day, and she used to tell Ben what she had read, and to try very hard to get him to give up his bad ways. But though he loved her, yet he went on just the same. Now and then he would stay at home, and not go to the ale-house, or out with his gun at night, and sit and talk to Mary, or hear her read; but next day it was just as bad as ever. Off he would go, and, may be, come home drunk, or with some hares or other game, which showed what he had been about. The miller only said, "Ben, Ben, take care." And Ben laughed, and said, "Don't fear; I'll not be found out." And he packed up the game, and sent it off to London.

It seemed sure that Ben would come to a bad end, if he was to go on in this way. Mark Page did not know what the Bible says: "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. xxii. 6). But Mark trained

up his child in the way he should not go ; and what could he think but that, when he was old, he would not depart from it ? that is to say, from the way he should not go. Ben Page's mother let him do just what he liked ; she beat him, to be sure, when she was angry, but that was not for his good, and that Ben soon found out. If he was quiet, and did not break any of her things, she did not scold him.

Ben was a bad boy, but a worse man. His friends were wild and bad, and he soon broke all the laws of God and man. He was sure to bring grief to the heart of his father and his mother ; yet what could they hope for else ?

Farmer Grey had no wife nor child, but a brother of his died and left his only son to the farmer's care. Young James Grey was quite a young man when he came to Hillside. He was a fine, tall lad, with a kind, good face, and people who saw him said that they were sure they should like him. There was no pride in him, it seemed, for he went about the village and talked to those he met in a pleasant way, which won all hearts. He was to help his uncle on the farm, it was said, though he did not look much like a farmer. His hands were fair, and his cheeks and brow showed that he had not been out much in the sun.

James Grey had not been long at Hillside, when one day, as he passed the mill, he saw Mary Page at the door of her house, on her way to hang up some clothes to dry on the green. He passed more

than once that day, and each day that he could, and he felt quite sad if he did not see Mary Page.

Mary Page soon found out who he was ; and one day he stopped and spoke to her, and soon they were great friends. Mistress Page was glad to see him come to the house, for she thought that his uncle was rich, and that he would make a good husband for Mary. The miller, too, thought that he would make a good son-in-law. So James Grey was asked in, and soon found himself quite at home. Ben Page was glad to see James, for he said, "he may some day be a friend in need to me." Ben also found him a good-natured, good-tempered young man, who would not say No to what he was asked to do. The very thing for which Ben liked James was one of James' great faults ; he could not say No to what he was asked to do ; if it was wrong or if it was right he did not stop to think, it seemed the same to him. If he was asked to do wrong, he did wrong ; if he was asked to do right, and it was what he liked, he did right. Still it could not be said that James Grey was a bad young man—not at all—he was what was called a good young man. He was well-behaved, and joined in public worship, and seldom got drunk ; he might have been so once or twice, but then he was quiet, it was not known. He did not swear, and was civil to all people. There was one thing James wanted. It was religion. He did not care to please God, though he read the Bible and said his prayers. James knew that his uncle, Farmer Grey, did not think well of Mark Page. So

James did not tell the farmer that he went to Mark Page's house, and that he loved Mary Page, and thought that he would ask her to be his wife some day. If he had told his uncle what he wished, the farmer would have said, "If Mary Page is a good girl, though I cannot think well of her father and her mother, she shall be your wife if you wish it and she wishes it."

But James did not say a word of Mary to his uncle, and the farmer did not think that James even knew her. Mary thought very well of James. He seemed to her a good young man, and much more steady than Ben. So she was very glad to see him when he could come to the mill, and by-and-by she gave him her whole heart; James, too, gave her his heart. Yes, he loved her, he thought, very much; but, in truth, he did not love her by half so much as she loved him. Mary might have done James much good at this time if she had had him to herself; but he and Ben became great friends, and Ben undid all the good she had done James, and did him much harm. Ben took good care not to show James at first what bad things he did. He talked of others getting drunk, and said there was no great harm in it, and then he said how fine it was to go out with a gun at night and kill game, and what bold chaps did that sort of thing; and then he went on to boast of all sorts of bad things which he did.

Now if James had been wise he would not have stopped to hear all this, but would have said, "I am sure that is bad, and harm must come of it," and

would have kept out of Ben's way. When a bad person tries to make another do ill, the only safe plan for the other is to keep out of the bad person's way. James did not do that, and more than once he went with Ben to the ale-house and got drunk. From the first day James did this, Ben made him do just what he liked. James went out shooting at night with Ben—that is, poaching; he was often at the ale-house with him, and in bad company, and many other evil things they did together.

Poor Mary did not know this, but thought rather that James would do good to Ben, and lead him right. She had to learn the sad truth that all men are prone to do ill, and that the bad are more apt to lead than to be led.

Still it must not be said that James was quite lost to all sense of what was right. He often wished that he had not been led to do some of the things that he did do. More than once he said to Ben, "Ben, I know that is bad; I will not go with you."

Then Ben would laugh at him and say, "You know that is bad! That's very fine; but you know that there are other things much worse by a long way. Come on; don't go and say No when I ask you."

James would stand and think, and say to himself, "Where's the harm, just for this once? I don't like not to please Ben, and when I marry Mary I'll give it up, and all will be right."

So James went on from bad to worse, for he had not got in his heart faith in God or love to Christ.

Mark Page did not mind James doing the bad things he did with Ben, for he said, "If the two get into a scrape, Farmer Grey must get Ben out of it for the sake of his nephew. Young men must sow their wild oats, and may be he won't make the worse husband to Mary for it."

All this time Mark Page did not love Farmer Grey more than at first. Not a day passed that he did not say something against him, or do something to do him harm.

Farmer Grey knew this, but did not say an ill word to Mark. If he met him it was always in a kind voice he said, "Good day, Mark Page. Good day, miller. Fine breeze for the mill. No lack of grist, I hope; I shall soon have some for you. Shall be glad to send my corn to your mill."

"What can he want of me? I can do him no good;" growled the miller as he walked on.

CHAPTER III.

It would have been a good thing for Mark Page if Sam Green had left him. When Mark thought of doing anything bad, there was Sam at hand to say, "Go on; no harm; you have a right to do what you like. No man should tell me what I ought to do; that I know."

Sam was a stupid fellow too, as are many bad people, and it seemed strange that he did not get into more scrapes than he did. He hated Farmer

Grey even more than did Mark Page. Why, it would have been hard to say, except just for this cause, that Sam was a bad man and the farmer was a good one.

The sails of the mill had been going round and round for many a day, and hundreds of sacks of grist had been ground, when one night Mark was roused from his sleep by the sound of the wind howling round the house.

“I made all right and snug at the mill,” he thought; “there is no use to get up and look to it.” Still the wind went on howling through the windows and doors, and the window-panes shook and rattled, and the doors creaked, and it seemed at times as if the house would come down.

“Will the mill stand it?” asked Mark of himself. He tried to go to sleep again, but he could not. He thought and he thought of all sorts of things which he could not drive out of his head.

When a good man thinks at night, his thoughts may often be pleasant; but when a bad man thinks, and thinks, as did Mark Page, in spite of himself, his thoughts are very sad and full of pain.

Mark thought of the many bad things he had done. There was not one good deed he could think of. “If I was to die where should I go to?” he asked himself. “If my mill was to be blown down, who would pity me? What friends have I? What have I done to gain friends? Not one thing. I am not kind to the poor; I do not give anything to help them. No one loves me; no one cares for me. My son does

not ; he never does what I ask him. My wife does not, she never cares to please me. Mary does, maybe ; but then she looks at me as if she wished that I was different to what I am. Oh I do wish the day would come, that I might get up and go about my work and not think of all these things."

Still the wind howled and moaned and whistled, and the doors and windows rattled, and the rain came down, pat, pat, pat, on the roof, and the water rushed by the house in torrents, and the walls shook as if they would come down.

"Oh if the roof was to fall in and kill me!" thought the miller: "where shall I be to-morrow?"

At last the noises ceased, and sleep shut the miller's eyes. When he awoke the storm was over. He looked out to see if any harm had come to his mill. There it stood, the long arms stuck out just as usual. He was soon dressed. On his way to the mill he called Sam Green. When they got near they found that the wind had done harm to some of the sails of the mill, which were stretched on the long arms.

"Sam, before the mill can go we must mend these sails," said the miller. "Go to the house and get the tools ; you and I can do it."

"Yes, master," said Sam. "It would be a rum mill-sail I couldn't tackle."

Sam brought the tools, and he and Mark Page went into the mill. They found that the storm had done some harm to the inside of the mill, and that two or three things were out of place. They soon put

them right though, as they thought, and then they set to work to mend the sails. They had much grist to grind, and they were in a hurry; so the miller climbed along one of the arms with the tools he wanted, and Sam went along another. There was a nice breeze—not much—but it seemed as if it would get stronger and stronger. So they worked on as fast as they could, that they might soon get the sails mended and the mill going.

There they were, the miller and his man, out at the end of those long arms high up in the air. Few people would have wished to have changed places with them.

“Make haste, Sam,” cried the miller from his perch. “It’s a tough job I have got here. I shall want your help.”

“All right, master, I shall soon be done,” said Sam, and he worked on.

“Hallo, Sam, what are you about, man?” cried the miller on a sudden.

“Nothing, master,” said Sam, hammering away.

“Nothing! nothing?” cried out the miller, at the top of his voice. “Why the mill is moving. Stop it, man; stop it.”

“I can’t stop it, master, nor any man either,” shrieked out Sam, as the long arms of the mill began to move round and round.

“Hold on to the last, then,” cried the miller; “it is your only chance.”

“I can’t, master; I can’t,” cried Sam, near dead with fright.

The miller clutched round the arm with all his might. Sam went round once. It was more than he could bear; as the arm to which he clung neared the ground, he let go. Of course he was dashed with great force to the ground. Had his head struck it, he would have been killed; but his legs came first. One leg was broken, and there he lay not able to get up and help his master, and almost dead with fear as the long arms swept round and round above his head.

Still the miller held on. He shut his eyes, for he dared not look at the ground, which he seemed to be leaving for ever; and he felt that the mill was going faster and faster each moment. He knew too that he was growing weaker and weaker, and that the time would soon come when he could hold on no longer, and that he must be dashed with force on the ground and killed. What could save him? Sam lay helpless on the ground.

“Oh, I shall be killed; I shall be killed,” he thought. “Help! help!”

From whom was help to come? He could not pray; he never prayed when he lay down at night, when he got up in the morning. He could not pray to God now. Who else could help him! No human being was likely to see him, for his wife and son and daughter were still in bed, and few people passed that way. His breath grew short, his heart seemed as if it did not beat.

“Oh! oh! my last moment is come, and I must soon stand before that God I have seldom thought

of, never prayed to in this life. Where must I go? where must I go? I will lead a better life if I am saved. I will! I will!"

Just then he heard a cheerful voice cry out, "Well done, Mark: hold on, hold on; we'll stop the mill soon for you."

The words were spoken by the man whom Mark Page said he hated more than any other man on earth,—his neighbour, Farmer Grey. Farmer Grey had been riding round his farm in the cool of the morning, when, looking up towards the mill, he saw Mark Page and his man Sam Green at work on the arms. Then, as he looked, the arms began to go round and round with Mark on them.

Farmer Grey, on this, dashed up the hill at a gallop, jumped from his horse and rushed up the steps into the mill to try and stop the arms. He had been a few times in a wind-mill, and knew something about the works. At great risk though of hurting himself, he seized what he thought was the right crank to make the mill stop. His wish was to stop the mill just as the arm to which the miller clung rose above the ground. His heart beat as he watched for the proper moment. It was life or death to the miller. If he stopped it too soon Mark might be dashed to the ground; if he waited till it rose too far he would be thrown up in the air and have a heavy fall. Farmer Grey watched; the right moment came, he stopped the mill, then fast as he could move he ran down the steps, and was in time to receive Mark Page in his arms as he fell without sense from the

arm to which he had till that moment clung. Had the miller gone but one round more, he must have dropped, and would surely have been killed.

Farmer Grey undid his neckcloth, and got some water and bathed his face; but it was some time before the miller came to himself. When he did, the first words he said, when he opened his eyes, were, "Well; I did not think, Farmer Grey, that you would have done this for me."

"Why not, neighbour Page?" asked the farmer, with a smile. "I saw a fellow-man in danger, and of course I ran to help him. I am very glad that God has let me save your life. Give God the praise. Raise your voice to Him for that and all His other mercies."

"Yes, farmer, I will try," said Mark Page; "I have been a bad man all my life, and I don't like to think where I should have been by this time if you had not come to save me."

"It is the way to amend; the first step I may say, to find out and own that we are bad; so, neighbour, I am truly glad to hear you own that you are bad," said Farmer Grey. "But I must not let you talk now. Come, we must help your man there. He seems to be badly hurt."

"He wouldn't hold on to the last, as I told him," said Mark.

"Well, Sam; what harm has come to you?"

"Broken a leg, to my belief;" growled out Sam.

Farmer Grey found that Sam had indeed, as he said, broken a leg. Mark was now able to get up

and walk, and he went to the house to call his son. Ben had been out till late, and had come home wet, and did not like to be called up.

“Sam Green has broken his leg. Come down quickly I say,” cried out Mark.

“Let him sit still and mend it, while I put on my clothes,” said Ben from the window.

Farmer Grey heard him. “That young man will, I fear, not come to a good end,” he thought. “When I hear a man laugh at the pain or grief of others, I am sure that his heart is not right towards God or towards his fellow-man.”

Ben at last came out and got a hurdle, and he and his father, with Farmer Grey, put Sam Green on it, and bore him to the house. Sam cried out that they were killing him; so when Farmer Grey heard this he put his hand under Sam’s leg, and spoke to him just as kind and soft as if he had been a little child. Sam did not say anything, but he ceased to growl, or to cry out that he was hurt. Mary had heard her father call out, and she was at the door when they got there. Farmer Grey had not before this spoken to her. He now watched her as she went about the house, making ready the bed in the spare room for poor Sam, and heard her speak so gently and so kind to him.

“That is a good girl,” he thought. “Can she be the miller’s daughter? If so, she seems very unlike Mark and his son. I must see more of her.”

As soon as Sam was placed on the bed, Ben was sent off to fetch the surgeon to set his leg.

“Tell him that I beg he will make haste, for the poor man is in great pain,” said Farmer Grey, as Ben got on his horse.

“I will just break my fast with you, miller, that I may help poor Sam,” said Farmer Grey. “We must get his trousers cut open, and his boots off; and it may be we shall have to cut them off also. It does not do to pull at a broken leg.”

Sam did not at all like to have his trousers cut open or his boot cut off: “Hold, hold!” he cried out. “Why I gave twelve and sixpence for those boots only the week before last, and I will not have them spoilt.”

“Which is best, friend Sam, to lose your leg or perhaps your life, or to lose a boot, for it is not a pair? What is a boot compared to a man’s leg? A boot will wear out in a few months; his leg is to last him for his life. And let me ask you, what is a man’s sin, his favourite sin, which he can retain at best but for his life, compared to his soul, which will last for ever? No man can get rid of his soul. He cannot put it out as he can a light. Do what he can, it will last for ever.”

“O sir, don’t go and talk in that way,” cried out Sam; “I don’t like it—I can’t bear it.”

“Well, well, friend, I will not talk more to you now on the matter,” said Farmer Grey. “Some day you may like to hear more.”

“May be, may be—oh! oh! oh!” Sam Green groaned with pain.

At last the surgeon came, and set Sam’s leg. He

shook hands with Farmer Grey. "I wish that we had more like you," he said to the farmer. "I knew when it was you sent for me, that some one was really hurt. The man will get well, I hope, and his leg will be of good use to him if he keeps quiet and does not fret." The surgeon said he would call again in the evening, and went away.

"Now, Sam, we will let your wife and family know, that they may come and see you," said Farmer Grey.

"Much obliged, sir; but I have no wife, and no family, except one daughter; and she is married, and lives with her husband, and has her children to look after, and does not care for me," said Sam.

"We won't think that of her," said the farmer. "I will let her know what has happened to you. May be, you would like to have one of her children with you."

Sam looked pleased for the first time, and said, "Well, sir, there is a little chap—my grandchild—I should like to have him now and then with me. They call him Paul, Tiny Paul. He is a merry little fellow, and he'd keep me from getting low."

"Well, we'll try and send Tiny Paul to you," said the farmer. "What is your daughter's name?"

"Susan Dixon, sir," answered Sam. "Dixon is her husband's name. He is a decent, hard-working man, and she's a good wife; but I never cared much for any of them, except Tiny Paul. You'll send Tiny Paul to me then, sir?"

"Yes, Sam, yes; I have promised that I will," said Farmer Grey, thinking to himself, "I may win

over Sam Green yet. He has a soft part in his heart, and I have found it."

Farmer Grey had a good deal of talk with Mary before he went home. He liked all she said, and all he saw her do. "That is a good young woman, I am sure," he said to himself. She, too, was very grateful to him for having saved her father's life by his courage and presence of mind. Then, too, he was the uncle of James Grey, and she was glad that he seemed pleased with her.

CHAPTER IV.

It would have seemed that James Grey and Mary Page had now every chance of being made happy. So they might, if James had not got into evil ways. He had not spoken of Mary to his uncle, and he did not know that Farmer Grey had seen her, and was much pleased with her. By this his folly was shown. Had he been frank with his uncle, and told him all the truth, how much better it would have been for him!

A few days after the accident at the mill, James came, as usual, to see Mary. He had a long talk with her, and said that he was so glad his uncle now knew her, and that he was sure the farmer would let him marry her. Still he did not say that he had told his uncle he wished to do so. When he at last got up to go away, Ben followed him.

“James,” said Ben, “I have some work for to-night. You must come. You will never have seen such sport in your life. There are six other chaps will join us, all true as steel.”

“No, no, Ben; I must go home,” said James. “My uncle does not like me to be out late at night, and he has heard of one or two of the things I have done with you.”

“That is good,” said Ben, with a sneer. “Why, I would not let my father order me about as he likes; much less an uncle, I should think. Dear me, ‘my uncle won’t let me do this,’ ‘my uncle won’t let me do that’; a nice state of things. Come, James, be a man, and come along with me.”

James never could stand Ben’s sneers; so the next time Ben said, “Come along,” he answered, “Very well; but only for this time.”

“Oh, of course, I know,” said Ben. “I don’t want you to get into any scrape, of course, lad. Come back into my room. Those clothes won’t suit you: you must put on some of mine. We can slip out again, and my sister won’t see you.”

In a short time, Ben and James stole out with their guns and shot-belts and powder-flasks.

“It is not near home,” whispered Ben.

“That’s a good thing,” answered James; but they spoke very little.

They had walked two miles when they fell in with three men, who seemed to know Ben well; and soon after that they met three more. All went on together. James found that they were going into

the park of a gentleman who very strictly preserved his game and had several gamekeepers.

“Even if they meet us, they won’t dare to attack us ; and if they do, we can take very good care of ourselves,” said Ben.

The party of poachers were in search of pheasants, of which there were a great many in the park. They knocked over one after the other, till each man was well loaded. James soon began to take a pleasure in the sport, and killed as many as the rest.

They had begun to talk of going home, all well pleased with their night’s work, when, as they were within fifty yards of the place where they were to leave the park, they found themselves face to face with four keepers.

“Stand back, and let us pass !” cried Ben Page. “We don’t want to say anything to you, and you shall not say anything to us.”

“That won’t do, young man,” said the principal keeper ; “you must give up all the game you have shot, and let us know your names.”

“That we won’t do. Push on, Ben Page,” shouted one of the men.

The click as of guns being cocked was heard.

“If you fire, so do we ; and we have three shots to your one,” cried Ben. “On, lads, on.”

“I know you by your voice, Master Page,” said one of the keepers. “I see you too, now I am nearer to you.”

“If you do, take that for your pains,” exclaimed Ben, scarcely thinking, in his rage, of what he was

about. The report of a gun was heard. One of the gamekeepers fell. The poachers dashed forward. Another keeper was knocked over. The rest ran off to hide in the wood, thinking that they would all be murdered ; while the poachers, without stopping to see what harm had been done to the fallen men, hurried out of the wood, leaving them on the ground. Bad men are often cowards ; and cowards are careless of what others suffer.

The poachers talked very big, but their hearts sunk within them. The most unhappy was James Grey. The others dreaded being found out and punished. With him it was not the fear of being found out and punished, so much as the thought that he had been with those who had caused the death of a fellow-creature ; for he made sure, from the groan the keeper uttered when he fell, that he had been killed. His conscience, never quite at rest, even when he went with Ben Page into his worst haunts, was awakened.

“ I am just as guilty as if I had killed the man with my own hand,” he said to himself. “ And maybe the other man will die too ; for the butt end of Turner’s gun came down with a fearful blow on his head, and he dropped as if shot. What shall I do ? What shall I do ? I will go and deliver myself up, and confess all. I shall be hung very likely : but I would sooner be hung than feel that I had killed a fellow-man.”

Such were James’s thoughts as he and his companions hurried towards Hillbrook. Here and there on their way the rest of the men went off to their

homes, till Ben and James were left alone. James then told Ben of his sorrow at what had happened, and how he thought he would give himself up.

“Nonsense; that will never do,” said Ben. “No one knows who fired the shot, or who knocked the other keeper down; you don’t, I am sure.”

Ben knew that James did know well enough that he, Ben himself, had shot the keeper.

“I wish from my heart, Ben, that I did not,” said James.

“If that is it, the only thing is to keep out of the way,” said Ben. “Now listen, James, a faint-hearted fellow is sure to peach, and out of the way you must keep. I say *must*—understand me.”

“I will keep out of the way, Ben, whether I must or not,” said James, in a tone of great sorrow. “You have been the ruin of me, Ben; but it was my own fault, I ought to have known better.”

“Nonsense, James: things are not so bad as you think,” said Ben. “Just come in and change your clothes and go home to bed. You can get in as you have done before, and who is to know that you were out of the house all night? I say that you shouldn’t be in too great a fright; still you must go away for a time, till the matter has blown over. I’ll think of some plan for you before long.”

James Grey, who had far more education than Ben Page, felt himself completely in his power.

James hurried home unseen, and got to bed. He could not sleep. He thought over all sorts of plans. Two or three days before he had been at the market

town five miles off. He had there observed a soldier, a sergeant with a number of gay coloured ribbons in his hat, beating up for recruits, for service in India. James had stopped to listen to him as he was speaking to a group of young men who stood round with open mouths, hearing of the wonders of that distant country—the money to be got—the pleasures to be enjoyed. “Every cavalry soldier out there is a gentleman,” said the sergeant. “He has at least three servants to attend on him ; one to forage, one to groom his horse, and one to attend on him.”

James at the moment had thought that if it was not for Mary and his uncle he should like to try his fortune in that far-off wonderful country. The idea came back to him, if the sergeant was still there he would enlist at once. No time was to be lost. He must be out of the country before he was suspected of having been one of the party who killed the game-keeper. He rose and dressed quickly. He put up some shirts and socks and a few other articles, and all the money he had got, and left the house before any one was up. He would much have liked to have seen his kind uncle again, but he dared not wait till he was on foot. There was one other person, however, whom he must see before he went away, Mary Page. She was always an early riser he knew. He ran rather than walked to the mill-house. She opened the door as he reached it, and came out into the garden.

“Mary, I am going away,” he said in a hurried voice ; “something has happened, it can’t be helped



now though ; only, Mary, I want to tell you that I love you now, and shall love you always. Don't think ill of me, don't think me guilty ; not more guilty than I am, if you hear anything about me. I cannot tell you more. I must not tell you."

Mary turned pale with terror, as much from his looks as from what he said. He took her in his arms and kissed her, and added, " You will think of me, I know you will. I won't ask you not to love any one else ; that would be hard on you, for I don't know how long I may be away ; but, if I ever do come back, Mary, and I have changed, greatly changed from what I now am, I hope to ask you to be my wife. For your sake, Mary, I will try to grow better,

to be firm, to learn to say No when tempted to do ill. That has been my ruin now, may cause my ruin for ever."

Before Mary could answer him,—for he was not a minute with her, and she was too much astonished at first to speak,—he had torn himself from her, and was hurrying along the road.

"Oh stay, oh stay, and tell me all," she cried out; but he either did not hear her, or would not venture to turn back. As he got out of sight of the mill he ran on as fast as his legs could carry him, though he stopped, and had to walk slowly when he saw any one coming. He had got half way to the town, when as he was running on he heard the sound of horses' hoofs behind him galloping quickly over the road.

"Some one coming after me," he thought. For the first time in his life he felt what abject fear was. His knees trembled under him, and to save his life he could not have run farther. Still James Grey was no coward. In a good cause he could have fought as well as any man. Soon he heard a voice behind him cry out, "Jump up, James; I guessed what you were after. It was my idea you were going to enlist; so will I. Jump up, I say; no time to lose."

It was Ben Page who spoke. For some moments James scarcely understood him. Ben had a led horse. He threw himself into the saddle, and they were quickly in the town, where the horses were left at a stable; Ben having told a carter to come for them.

The two young men then went out to look for the

recruiting-sergeant. He was soon found. He cast his eye up and down over James, asked him a few questions, told him to let him see his handwriting, and at once enlisted him.

“If you are steady, as you look, you will be a corporal before many more months are over, and a sergeant soon after,” he said, with a nod of approval.

A body of recruits were starting that very morning for the depôt, whence they were to embark. James was ordered to go with them.

The sergeant was uncertain as to what regiment Ben would suit. He was scarcely of sufficient height, and a very different looking sort of man. He promised, however, to give him an answer in the course of a few days.

James was very thankful when he found that Ben was not to go with him. He thought, “He has already led me into evil; if he comes now, how shall I be able to withstand him better than I have done?”

James’s heart was heavy, yet he tried to keep his spirits up among his new comrades. He was anxious, too: every stranger he saw looking about he thought might be a sheriff’s officer, come to take him prisoner. Most of the men were hoping that the day they were to go on board the ship might be put off: his great wish was that they might sail sooner than had been expected. He had written a letter to his kind uncle, asking his forgiveness for what he had done, and expressing his love and gratitude to him.

He had heard nothing from Ben. This was so far well. He could have gained nothing, if Ben had come.

At length the day arrived for the troops to embark. The ship sailed, and bore James Grey far away from the shores of Old England.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN Farmer Grey got up in the morning, and found that his nephew had left the house without saying where he was going, he was somewhat surprised; but, as he thought that he would soon return, he did not give himself much concern about the matter.

The farmer went out among his labourers in the fields, and came back to breakfast; but James had not returned. The farmer made inquiries among all his people; no one had seen James. Dinner-time arrived, still he did not appear. It was late in the day that a friend, Farmer Mason, called on Farmer Grey. "Have you heard of the murders in Sir John Carlton's park, last night?" asked Farmer Mason. "Two of his keepers killed, and another wounded, I am told. Daring outrage! The murderers are known, I hear. It will go hard with them if they are taken; for the magistrates are determined to put a stop to poaching, and will show no mercy to poachers. They will do their best to prove them guilty."

Farmer Grey's mind was greatly troubled when he heard this. He could not help connecting it, somehow or other, with the disappearance of James.

“That wild lad, Ben Page, has had something to do with it ; of that I am sure,” he said to himself.

As soon as his guest was gone, he walked down to the mill. The miller and his wife were out. Mary was alone. He found her crying bitterly. She at once confessed that she had seen James early in the morning, and that he told her he was going away, not to return ; but that where he was going to, and what he was going to do she could not tell. She was also anxious about her brother, who had gone away without leaving any message. This was the utmost information she could give. It was enough to confirm Farmer Grey’s fears. He did not tell Mary what they were. He thought it would break her heart if he did so. He could give her very little comfort, for there was nothing he could think of to bring comfort to his own heart, as far as his nephew was concerned. He had long seen that he wanted what alone can keep a man right under temptation, that is, good principles.

James, when he came to him, had been always respectable and decent in his conduct ; but then he had never been tempted. The farmer had been very anxious about him when he first found that he was so often in the company of Ben Page, and he now blamed himself for not having taken pains to separate the two, and still more that he had not tried harder to give James those good principles which he so much wanted. He did not think that he had done any good to James by all he had said, but in truth the words had sunk farther into the young man’s

heart than he supposed ; and often and often, as James walked the deck of the ship at night, or camped out with his comrades on many a hard-fought battle-field in India, those words came to his mind, and helped to keep him on a right course,—not that the words alone did so ; for James, who had been taught to pray when he was young, became a man of prayer. Yes ; the dark, sun-burnt, fierce-looking soldier prayed every day, morning and night, lying down or marching, and often in the midst of battle, while bullets were flying about, shells were bursting, and round shot were whistling through the air. He read the Bible, too, and spoke of it to others, and guided his own steps by what it taught. Was he less thought of because he did these things ? Was he looked on as a coward ? No ; there was no man in the regiment more liked, and there were few soldiers braver than he was.

Had his uncle and Mary known how changed a man he had become, their hearts would have been saved many a pang. We should not think that because our words do not seem to be listened to, that therefore they are doing no good ; more particularly if they are spoken in a prayerful spirit and with an earnest desire to do good.

“ Well, Mary, I must try and find out what has become of this poor nephew of mine,” said Farmer Grey, kindly getting up and taking her hand. “ We will hope that he will come back some day. Do not let it be known that he came here to see you this morning ; indeed, it will be better if you say nothing

about his being absent from home. Only my old housekeeper, Dame Dobbs, knows that he left home this morning, and she is able to say that he slept in his bed last night."

These words made poor Mary more unhappy still, for she began to think that James must have done some act which had made him fly for his life, and that he might, perhaps, be taken and punished—she dared not think how. Oh, how much sorrow and pain do those who act ill, cause their friends and those they love best on earth! Nothing that day was heard of James or Ben. On the next day, rumours of the affray between a body of poachers and the gamekeepers reached the mill, but neither Ben's nor James Grey's name was mentioned. Still Mary could not but feel sure that they had had something to do with the matter, though she hoped that they might escape.

The miller, on hearing of the fray, and that Ben had disappeared the next morning, sat by himself more gloomy and silent than ever. Perhaps he might have thought, "This comes of my teaching, or rather of my want of teaching, of my bringing up." In the evening, three stout, strong, comfortably clothed men came to the door: Mary let them in, not knowing who they could be; Mark turned pale when he saw them.

"Your servant, Mister Page," said one. "Your son, Ben Page, is wanted—he knows what for."

"My son, Ben Page, isn't at home," answered Mark, in a much more quiet tone than he used to speak in.

“Where is he, then?” asked the man.

Mark could not tell, nor when he would return.

“You know then what he is wanted for, Mister Page?”

Mark bent his head, and put his fingers to his lips, that the man might not speak before Mary. He then told her to go out of the room and look after Sam Green, whom she had not visited for some time.

“Yes; it’s about the matter at Snaresborough, with the keepers, I suppose,” said the miller. “But I don’t know that he had anything to do with it.”

“Hope not, for his sake; he’ll be sooner out of limbo,” said the constable. “But you’ll excuse me, Mister Page, we must search the house for your son; we have a couple of hands to look out outside, so he’ll not escape if he attempts it.”

Of course Mark could offer no objection to this. The constable and his companions searched the house from top to bottom, looking into and under the beds, and into every cupboard and corner to be found. Then they searched the mill and all the outhouses, but no Ben was to be found. Mistress Page went nearly into fits when she saw them. Mary cried bitterly, her worst fears were become real. When Sam Green saw them, a look not often seen on his face came over it, as he lay on his bed of pain—for his leg hurt him much.

“Ah! if the lad had been better taught he wouldn’t have been in this trouble,” he said to himself. “I might have done him some good, and I never did but harm.”

These words showed that Sam Green was changing, if not changed. The constables were still in the house, when a horse was heard coming along the road. Mary, looking out, saw that it was Ben. She waved to him to go back, but he did not see her. She tried to cry out, but her voice failed her, and he had entered the court-yard and thrown himself from his saddle before he heard her warning. Then he understood that something was wrong. His horse was dusty, hot, and trembling. He was about to leap into his saddle when one of the constables who had been watching outside and had seen him enter the yard, ran into it and seized his bridle, shouting out to his comrades in the house.

Ben struck right and left with a heavy whip, and tried to break away; but the man held him fast. The other constables then coming out, he was secured. Poor Mary felt as if she should die when she saw Ben seized, but she could do nothing to help him. He was brought into the house, and handcuffs were put on his wrists.

“Now we have caged our bird we must be off,” said the chief constable.

“Oh, treat him kindly,” said poor Mary, with the tears in her eyes. “He is not as bad as you may think—indeed, indeed he is not.”

“Never knew one on ’em as was,” said the man. “But for your sake, miss, I’ll do my best to make my young master comfortable, May be it’s the first time he has been had up; and, if he gets off, may be it will be the last.”

Mary could say nothing to this remark. Her mother, who had come in, wrung her hands, and cried, and then called the constables all sorts of hard names, while the miller looked as if he would have struck them. More than once he glanced up at his gun, which hung over the mantelpiece. The constable looked at him, and observed,—

“Say what you like with your tongue, Mistress Page; I’m accustomed to much worse than that; but don’t you, Mister Page, touch me—that’s all. I’m in the execution of my duty—mind that.”

The miller had to curb his temper, and to say nothing, while his only son was carried off a prisoner. Mrs. Page wrung her hands, and bewailed her hard lot. Whilst out, she had heard of the murder of the gamekeepers, and with good reason feared that Ben was guilty of the crime. Ben did not speak. He could not say, “Rouse up, father; I am not guilty of the crime laid to my charge.”

With handcuffs on his wrists, as a felon, he was carried off by the officers of justice. When he was gone, the miller sat with his head bowed down, and his hands clasped between his knees. All he could say was, “Has it come to this? has it come to this?” The miller seemed to be really humbled and broken in spirit.

The next day Farmer Grey called to tell Mary that he had heard from James, and that he was safe. More he could not tell her. She begged him to see her father.

“Rouse up, neighbour,” he said in a kind voice;

“you have still much to do for your son. Secure a good lawyer to defend him. The use of a lawyer is not to get him off, if he is guilty, but to take care that he is not condemned unless his guilt is clearly proved. The expense will be great. I will share it with you.”

“You are too good; I don’t deserve it, Farmer Grey,” answered Mark. “And yet I would not have my son condemned, if he can be got off.”

“And I would not have him condemned, if he is not guilty,” said the farmer.

Farmer Grey went into the town to secure legal advice. His satisfaction was very great to find that the gamekeeper who had been shot was not dead, and that the one who had been knocked down was in a fair way of recovery. Still the magistrates had committed Ben and three other men to prison; and even if the man who was shot recovered, if Ben was found guilty, he could not expect less than a sentence of transportation for fourteen years. Still the news he had to take back to Mary was better than he expected.

CHAPTER VI.

NEITHER Mark Page nor his man, Sam Green, had been in the habit of attending public worship. Many years, indeed, had passed since Sam had last attended. Now Mark was ashamed to go, and Sam

could not. They had not either had prayers in their families, nor did they pray privately. It seems strange that any men should think that they can get on without prayer. They find out their sad mistake when the day of trial comes. These two men did so ; had it not been for Farmer Grey and for Mary, they would have been badly off indeed.

Mark Page went about the mill, as usual, and got a man to do Sam's work ; but he never went outside the gates ; and when he was in his own house, he sat with his head bowed down and his hands between his knees, not speaking a word. Sam Green lay on his bed, and growled and groaned with pain, except when Tiny Paul, his grandchild, was with him ; then he cheered up and spoke pleasantly, and even laughed at what the little fellow said or did.

Tiny Paul was a bright, merry little chap, with light curling hair and blue eyes. He would sing, and talk, and play, all day, and tell grandfather stories, which no one but Sam himself could understand. Sam smiled when he saw Tiny Paul, but at no other time. " If I had always had Tiny Paul with me, I don't think that I should have been so bad as I am," said Sam to himself ; but Sam was wrong. Neither Tiny Paul, nor any other human being, would have made Sam a better man than he was. It was his own evil heart was to blame ; that wasn't right with God.

The miller was one evening looking out from the window of his mill, when he saw in the distance a bright light in the sky. It grew brighter and brighter,

and now flames could be seen darting up out of the dark ground, as it were. "It is a house on fire," said the miller; "whose can it be?" He thought over all the houses in that direction. In the day he would not have gone out, but at night no one would know him. He was curious to learn whose house was burning. It was not his way to think how he might best assist the sufferers. So, saddling his horse, he rode out towards where he saw the fire burning. The flames lessened as he got nearer. It was clearly only a cottage. He thought of turning back; still he went on. He soon after reached a cottage, the walls only of which were standing. A number of people were gathered round it. He heard cries and exclamations of sorrow. A man had been burnt to death, and another had been much hurt. Then he heard his own name mentioned. He went a little nearer.

"It was all that wild young Page's fault," said some one. "If he hadn't wounded poor Thomas Harvey, so that he could not help himself, Thomas would have fled from the cottage and not have been burnt to death. And his poor wife, too; they say she'll not recover." The miller durst ask nothing further, but, turning his horse's head, rode back to his home.

The day of Ben's trial came at last. He was well defended, but one of those who were with him turned king's evidence, and swore to his having fired the shot which struck Thomas Harvey. It was proved, however, that Thomas Harvey did not die of his

wound, as the surgeon was of opinion that he was getting well when the cottage in which he lived had caught fire and he was burned to death. Did he then die of his wound, or was his death caused by the fire? Had he been well, it was argued, he might have escaped, as did the rest of those living in the cottage; but as it was, his wife and a friend nearly lost their lives in trying to save him.

The trial took up the whole day. Some were of opinion that Ben Page was guilty, and that he would be condemned to be hung. Still, as it was not quite certain that Thomas Harvey died by his hand, he gained the benefit of the doubt, and was condemned to be transported for fourteen years. Some thought his punishment light, but they little knew what his sentence meant in those days. The miller and his wife were thankful that their son was not to be hung. They were allowed to see Ben before he was sent off. They would not have known him in his yellow dress, and with his hair cropped short, and chains on his arms and legs. This sight caused them more grief than even the thought that he was to be sent away from them for so many years. Poor Mary also went to see him. He shocked her by the way he spoke of those who had tried him, and at James Grey for leaving him in the lurch. Mary was thankful to find that James's name had not once been mentioned during the trial, and that he was not suspected of having been mixed up in the matter. In vain she spoke of religion to her brother. He turned a deaf ear to all she said. With grief at her

heart she bade him good-bye, and her grief was greater because he seemed so hardened and indifferent to his fate.

So Ben Page was carried on board a convict ship, with nearly three hundred other men convicted of all sorts of crimes. They were placed under strict discipline on board ship. Soldiers with loaded arms stood over them, and if any one broke the rules, he was severely punished. Only a few were allowed to come on deck at a time to enjoy the fresh air and the sight of the sea. They had books, however; and the surgeon, who was a Christian man, taught those who wished to learn to read and write. He also begged them to repent, and to turn to Jesus Christ that their sins might be forgiven.

Thus day after day the convict ship sailed on. Once they were in a fearful storm, and the convicts were all kept shut up below. The big ship was tossed about, and lightning struck one of her masts and set her on fire, and the water washed over her and carried away her boats, and a leak was sprung, and all thought that they were going to the bottom. Some got into their beds and shut their eyes, as if they could shut out the death they thought was coming. Others tried to break on deck; a few broke out into loud, wild songs; and some, but very, very few, strove to pray; and even fewer still could pray. Those who put off prayer till death comes close to them, find, when too late, that they cannot pray. Those who had talked the loudest, and boasted of their ill deeds, now showed themselves the greatest cowards.

In a short time the fire was got under, and the wind and sea went down, and there was a chance that their lives might be saved. When they were once more safe, most of those who had tried to pray forgot their fears and again hardened their hearts.

At last the ship reached the distant land to which she was bound—Australia. The convicts were put into barracks, and then formed into road-gangs to make new roads through the country. They had first to build their huts, and then to work all day in the hot sun with pick-axes, and spades, and wheelbarrows. They were watched by overlookers, of whom many had themselves been convicts, and were very harsh and savage. When the day's work was done, the men were marched back to the huts, where they had to fetch water and firewood, and to cook their food. Day after day they led the same life; there was no change, no amusement; the sun rose, and the sun set, and the convicts rose to toil, but not for themselves; and lay down again at night, weary with their labour. Often and often Ben Page wished himself dead.

“Is this to last for thirteen more long years—all the best of my days?” he asked himself.

Another convict asked Ben if he would try to escape. They might be shot, but that was better than living on where they were. Ben agreed. They got off, and took to the woods—the bush it is called. They could only live by robbing. They watched a hut when the hut-keepers were out, stole some guns and powder and shot, and set up as bush-rangers—that is rob-

bers. They lived on for some months in the bush, now in one place, now in another. They stole horses and food and clothes. It was a very hard life though. Every man's hand was against them, and a price was set on their heads. They were afraid of the natives also, and suffered much from hunger and thirst. Ben sometimes wished himself back with the road-gang. They at last did so much mischief that parties were sent out against them. Ben's comrade was taken, and Ben was wounded, but escaped by the speed of his horse.

On—on he went. He dared not turn back, for his foes were behind him. Night came on, and he was obliged to stop, for his horse could go no farther. There was no water near; he had no food. He lay down and fell asleep, holding the bridle in his hand. When he awoke his horse was gone. He felt weary and stiff, and his wound pained him. The sun rose, scorching down on his head. In his flight he had lost his hat. His thirst was great. "Water, water," he cried for. Not a drop could he find. He walked on, and on, and on. No water; no signs of water. He sat down under a tree to rest, but he could not rest till he had found water. Again he sat down. He could walk no farther. A mist came over his eyes. He could not think—he could not pray. His throat was dry, his lips parched. He fell back with his arms stretched out, never again to rise.

Some months afterwards some travellers, in search of a new sheep run, came in the bush on the bones of a man. A bullet near the side made them guess

that he had died of a wound he had just before received. In a pocket-book in his jacket was found the name of Benjamin Page ; and a brace of pistols, a gun and powder-flask, were recognised as having been stolen from a hut by two bush-rangers, one of whom had been taken and hung.

Not till years afterwards did the Miller of Hillbrook learn how his unhappy son died—Mary never knew.

“ Oh that I had brought him up to fear God ! how different might have been his lot,” said the miller. “ It was I—I, that let my son be a castaway.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE miller was a changed man in some points after his son had been transported. He seemed to be more morose than ever, but it was observed that he seldom said or did anything to hurt his neighbours, as once was the case. Sam Green, as he began to recover from his broken leg, was much the same man as before, sour and grumpy. He was able to move to his own cottage, but matters did not improve there. Only when Tiny Paul was with him was he seen to smile. He was never tired of watching the little chap, who would get hold of one of his sticks and call it his horse, and ride round and round the room on it. “ Grandfather must give Tiny Paul a real horse, and then he will ride like a man,” said the child.

“Tiny Paul shall have a ride the first day grandfather can find a pony,” said Sam.

Not long after this Sam hobbled out with the aid of his sticks to a field near his cottage. At the other end of it was a large and deep pond. Sam sat himself down on a bank, and Tiny Paul played about near him. There were several horses and ponies feeding in the field. “Grandfather, let Tiny Paul have his ride,” said the child, pointing to an old, blind pony, grazing near. Just then a farmer’s boy came by, with a halter in his hand, on his way to catch a horse for his master. “Tom Smith, catch a pony for Tiny Paul to have a ride; do now!” cried the child.

Tom Smith was a good-natured lad, and was in no hurry; so he said, “Yes, I’ll catch thee a pony, and thou shalt have a ride, little one, that thou shalt.” The blind pony was very soon caught, and the halter put over his head. “There, Tiny Paul, jump up now, and thee shalt have a fine ride,” said Tom Smith. Tiny Paul caught hold of the long mane, and Tom Smith helped him up by the leg, till he had a firm seat.

“Now let Tiny Paul go,—he ride alone,” said the child. Tom Smith, thinking no harm could come to the little fellow, let go the halter.

“I say, Tom, keep near the pony’s head; the child has no notion of guiding him,” cried Sam.

“Oh yes, grandfather, Tiny Paul ride like huntsman in red coat,” cried the child, kicking at the pony’s sides, and making him trot by the old man.



“Now Tiny Paul make pony gallop,” said the child, hitting the animal with its halter, and urging it on by his voice and heels. Off set the pony; Tiny Paul laughed, and waved his hand to his grandfather.

Tom Smith, instead of following the pony, stopped to speak to the old man.

For an instant Sam’s eyes were off the child.

“Why where is the pony going?” exclaimed Sam, looking up.

The pony was making directly for the big pond.

“Stop him, Paul; stop him, tiny Paul. Pull at the halter, child,” shrieked the old man. “Run after him, Tom; run for your life. Oh mercy! Oh mercy! he’ll be into the water!”

Tom ran as fast as his legs could carry him.

Tiny Paul, though he did not see his danger, pulled at the halter as he was bid; but the old pony's mouth was too tough to feel the rope in it, and on he went, pleased to have somebody on his back again. It made him think of the days when he had corn to eat, and hay without the trouble of picking it up.

Tom Smith ran, and ran, and shouted to the pony to stop; but his foot went into a drain, and down he came. He jumped up, though he had hurt his leg, and ran on. The pony was close to the pond, which was full of weeds. He was ten yards still behind.

“Stop! stop!” cried Tom.

“Oh stop, stop! mercy! mercy! mercy!” shrieked old Sam, who was hobbling on as fast as his sticks would let him move.

The pony reached the edge. In he plunged. Tiny Paul clung to his mane, but cried out with fear.

The blind pony waded on, for the water was not at first deep. Tom jumped in, but soon got his legs caught by the weeds; and then the pony began to swim. Tom could not swim, so he dared not follow.

“Stick on, Tiny Paul, stick on,” he shouted.

But Tiny Paul was crying too much to hear him. Just then a stout weed caught the child's foot. Tiny Paul let go the mane. The pony swam on; the weed dragged Tiny Paul off, and the next moment Tom saw only one little hand clutching at the air above the water.

Sam Green was still some way off at that sad moment. He hobbled on till he reached the edge of the

pond, where he found Tom, who crawled out, sighing and crying bitterly.

“Where’s the child; where is Tiny Paul?” shrieked out the old man.

Tom said nothing, but pointed to the middle of the pond.

Sam did not seem to know what Tom meant, but looked to the other side, where the pony was standing shaking his shaggy sides.

“Where is Tiny Paul? where is Tiny Paul?” again asked the old man.

‘Down in there,’ said Tom, pointing to the middle of the pond.

Sam Green fell back as if shot. Tom thought that he was dead, and jumping up, ran off to call for help. He told everybody he met till he reached his master’s house.

People made out that some one was drowned; but whether it was Sam Green or Tiny Paul, they could not tell.

Among those Tom met was Farmer Grey. He at once rode to the pond, where he found poor Sam lying where he had fallen. Sam was carried back to his own cottage by order of the farmer, who sent at once for a doctor. The doctor came and said he would recover if treated with care.

“Then I will stay by him till I can find some one to take my place,” said Farmer Grey.

Meantime the pond was dragged, and Tiny Paul’s body was found: not Tiny Paul though; he had gone far away, to the bosom of One who loves little

children, and because of that love often takes them to Himself.

Tiny Paul's body was taken to the cottage of his father and mother. John Dixon could not speak for sorrow; and Mrs. Dixon, bursting into tears, threw herself on the body, and would not be comforted.

Some hours passed, and Sam Green awoke, as if out of a deep sleep. The first words he spoke were about Tiny Paul.

"Tiny Paul is in the hands of One gentle and kind, who will care for him far more than you or his father and mother can," said the farmer. "Do not grieve for Tiny Paul."

"What's that you say, Master Grey?" asked Sam quickly.

"That Tiny Paul is better off now than he might have been had you or his father or mother brought him up," said the farmer. "What is the eldest boy doing?"

"No good—no good, I fear. He is in prison," growled Sam in his old tone.

"And the second?" said the farmer.

"An idle dog. He's a great trouble to my poor daughter."

"And if I were to ask you, ten or a dozen years hence, what your youngest grandchild was about, might you not have had to say the same of him?"

"That's true," said Sam, looking up. "I might—yes, I might."

"Now God often takes to Himself those He loves; He loved Tiny Paul, so He took him."

“Yes ; I see God can take better care of him than I can.”

“Ay, sure, Sam, that He can and will, and maybe God had another reason for taking Tiny Paul.”

“What can that be ?” asked Sam.

“That He might draw you to Himself,” said Farmer Grey. “Would you wish to go where Paul is ?”

“Ay, that I would, sir,” said Sam, in an eager tone.

“Then, my friend, you must try to become like a little child, as Tiny Paul was, and be like him,” said the farmer.

“I’ll try, I’ll try,” answered Sam. “But how am I to do it, sir ? I feel very weak and foolish and bad ; I don’t know even how I can try.”

“Pray that God will send His Holy Spirit to help you. Trust to Him, and He will not fail you.”

Much more Farmer Grey said in the same style. He came day after day to see Sam. Sam, in the course of time, became a changed man. He not only no longer grumbled and growled, and spoke ill of his neighbours, but he was cheerful and contented, and seemed ready to be kind and do good to all he met. When he got his leg strong, he went back to his work at the mill, and Mark used to say that Sam was twice the man he used to be, and that much more grist was brought to the mill than when he was, as once, crabbed and sour to all who came near him.

Still Sam was often sad ; but it was not about Tiny Paul. It was when he thought of Ben Page,

the miller's son. "Ah," he thought, "how often and often, when he was a boy, I said things to him, and in his hearing, which must have done him harm. I might have led him right, and I led him wrong. Truly my brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE Miller of Hillbrook had a tough spirit and a hard heart, like many other people in the world. It galled him to think that his son was a felon, and that people could point at him as the felon's father. His business went on as usual, or rather better than usual, as he was always at home to attend to it. People knew that if they brought grist to his mill, they would be sure to have it ready ground at the day and hour they had named, if the wind blew to turn the sails. They found also that old Sam Green was always ready to oblige them if he could. "Great change has come over Sam,—can't understand it," said some of those who came to the mill. "Does he think that he is going to die? Can that make him so gentle and willing to oblige?"

The miller seemed to be much as he was before. He was even rude to Farmer Grey, when once or twice he came to his house. At last, one day, when the farmer was speaking in a serious tone to Mark, the miller told him plainly that he did not want to hear him or see him. The farmer said nothing, and

was just as civil and kind to Mark as before. One day, Mark had gone into the neighbouring town on business; Mary had walked up to see Mrs. Dobbs, Farmer Grey's housekeeper; and Mrs. Page was the only person in the house. Sam was at the mill, but all the other men were away with the carts. Mrs. Page had left a pile of wood to dry near the fire, before which some clothes were hung up to air; some fagots, besides, were placed against the wall, and some wood with which Mark was going to repair some work in the mill. Mistress Page was sitting in her room sewing, when she smelt a smell of fire, and then smoke made its way into the room, for the door was ajar. She began to fear that the house was on fire; and soon she was certain of it, for thick curls of smoke came out from the kitchen. Instead of shutting the door, and going up to the mill to call Sam, she threw open all the windows and doors she could reach, and ran out of the house, screaming "Fire! fire! fire!"

After some time Sam heard the poor woman's cries, and looking out of a window in the mill, saw the flames bursting forth from every part of the house. He hurried out of the mill as fast as his lameness would allow; but he soon saw that alone he could do nothing in putting out the fire.

In a few minutes, however, several men were seen coming from Farmer Grey's, with buckets in their hands, followed by the farmer on horseback. By the time, however, they reached the spot, the house was in flames, from one end to the other. Still there was

work for them to do, to try and save the outbuildings. Even the mill itself was threatened, as the wind blew towards it. The men pulled down the sheds nearest the house, and damped the straw thatch of two or three outhouses, the farmer not only showing them what to do, but working away with his own hands as hard as any one. At last the fire was got under, and the mill was saved ; but the house was burnt to the ground.

Just then the miller came back. He began to storm and rage, and asked who had burned down his house. "That we have to learn, neighbour," answered Farmer Grey. "It may be found that no one burned it down, and let us be thankful that things are not worse. However, come up to my house ; there are rooms and a sup for you till your own house is rebuilt ; your wife and daughter are already there."

"I wonder you can think of asking me, Farmer Grey," said Mark. "I have not given you much thanks for the good deeds you have already done me."

"Don't think of that, just now, neighbour," answered Farmer Grey. "We are bound to do good—or right, call it—and not to think of the return we are to get. If God was only to give His blessings to those who were sure to be grateful for them, He would give us far less than He does. We should get little or nothing, I suspect."

So the miller went to Farmer Grey's house with his wife and daughter. It seemed strange to him to

find himself there, and stranger still to feel the kind way in which the farmer treated him. Even now he could not understand it.

At last his house was finished, and he and his family went into it.

Mark had spent a good deal of money in rebuilding his house ; and though the mill itself wanted repairing, he said that he must put that off till another year ; he and Sam Green would patch it up to last till that time. That year passed by, and another came, and had nearly gone, and still nothing was done to the mill. One evening in autumn, the wind was blowing strong, and making even the new house shake, while it whistled and howled through doors and windows. The arms of the mill had been secured, Sam Green had gone home, and the miller himself, thinking that all was right, went to bed. The wind increased, the house shook more and more ; there was a fearful gale blowing. On a sudden he woke with a start. There was a crash,—then another,—and at last another, louder than either of the first. The weather, however, was so rough that he could not get up. Again he went to sleep. As soon as it was daylight he looked out. “Where was the mill?” Instead of seeing it, as he expected, against the cold grey sky of the autumn morning, he saw nothing at all. He rubbed his eyes again and again. At last he cast them towards the ground, and there lay scattered about and broken into small pieces, all that remained of his mill. The wheels and grindstone lay near the base ; the roof and sides had been

carried almost a hundred yards away, and the long arms still farther.

The miller's spirit was fairly broken when he saw the wreck of his mill.

He was aroused by Sam's voice. "This is a bad business, master," said Sam. "When I heard it blow so hard last night, I was afraid of something, though I did not think to find it as bad as this; but I said 'God's will be done, whatever happens.'"

"Well, He has done His will with me at all events," answered the miller sullenly. "I don't think He could do much worse either."

"If we got our deserts, He could do very much worse to us," said Sam firmly. "But, master, He is a God of love, and He sends these sort of misfortunes, not because He hates us, but because He loves us, and wishes us to think of Him, and trust to Him."

"Such talk as that won't rebuild the mill," exclaimed the miller almost savagely.

"May be it won't, master; but it may help to make you turn to God and trust to His mercy, as I try to do," said Sam.

"You, Sam! you, a wicked old sinner. How dare you talk of trusting to God?"

"Because, master, He asks me to do so, He promises to forgive me my sins," said Sam. "I should be declaring that God is a liar if I wouldn't trust Him."

"Then you think that I am a sinner, Sam," said the miller.

“I know that you are one, master,” answered Sam boldly.

The miller made no answer, but walked about the ruins, as if thinking what part would do to go up again. The rotten state of the mill, perhaps, made him think of his own state. Suddenly he stopped and said,—

“You are right, Sam ; I’ve been a wicked, hard-hearted man all my life, all rotten and bad, and it’s a wonder God hasn’t struck me down long ago, as the mill was struck down last night.”

“Master, I say to you what was said a short time ago to me, ‘I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance’ (Mark ii. 17). It’s a great thing to feel that we are sinners.”

“Sam, you speak like a parson, and I’m near sure you speak what is true,” said the miller.

“I speak what is in the Bible, master, and so I am sure that it is what is true,” answered Sam.

Just then the miller saw Farmer Grey riding up the hill.

“I do not come to condole with you, neighbour Page,” he said in his usual kind tone. “What means have you of putting up the mill again, and setting it going?”

“Not a shilling, farmer,” answered Mark. “I’m a ruined man.”

“Don’t be cast down, neighbour,” said Farmer Grey. “People, however, may take their grist to other mills to be ground, if yours is not working ; so I want you to send at once for carpenters and mill-

wrights, and to let them know that they are to look to me for payment. No words, neighbour, about thanks. Let it be done at once ; don't lose time. You'll repay me, some day, I am very sure." Then Mark Page knew the true meaning of having coals of fire heaped on his head.

In a short time the mill, rebuilt with sound timbers and strong machinery, was going round as merrily as ever, and grinding as much if not more grist than it did in former days. People had wondered at the change in Sam Green ; they wondered still more at the change in his master,—once so sullen and ill-tempered,—now so gentle and kind and obliging. The change in him was even greater than in the mill itself.

It is easy enough to rebuild a house : no human power can change a man's heart, as Mark Page's had been changed.

CHAPTER IX.

FARMER GREY, as he sat in his large house by himself, often felt sad and lonely. He had lost his wife when young ; she had had no children, and he had not married again. His nephew, James, was his only near relative ; and he found, whenever he thought of the young man, that, in spite of his faults, he loved him more than he had supposed. For a long time he had not heard from him ; and, as

several bloody battles had of late been fought in India, he began to fear that he might have been among the killed, and that no one had known his address to write and tell him. Still, Farmer Grey was not a man to sit by himself and brood over his sorrow. He went about as usual, doing all the good he could, not only in his own village but in the neighbourhood; and he never heard of a poor person falling sick or getting into trouble, whom he did not visit and relieve as far as he was able. He thought, too, more of poor Mary Page than of himself. He knew how much she loved James, and that she would spend the best days of her youth waiting for him to come back, as he was sure that she would never marry anybody else. Meantime, though Mary was often sad, still she believed that James was alive, and that he would some day come back to her. She often blamed herself for thinking so much of him, while the fate of her unhappy brother was so uncertain. It was surely through God's kindness that she never learned what his fate had been.

Mary's home, in many ways, was far happier than it had ever before been. She soon saw the change in her father, and it did her heart good. Instead of sitting gloomily by himself when he came in from work, or, as he used, reading some bad paper opposed to religion and government, his great pleasure was to listen to her reading the Bible, or to talk with her on religious subjects.

Whilst Mary Page was, one evening, sitting at the window of the parlour of the new mill-house, she saw

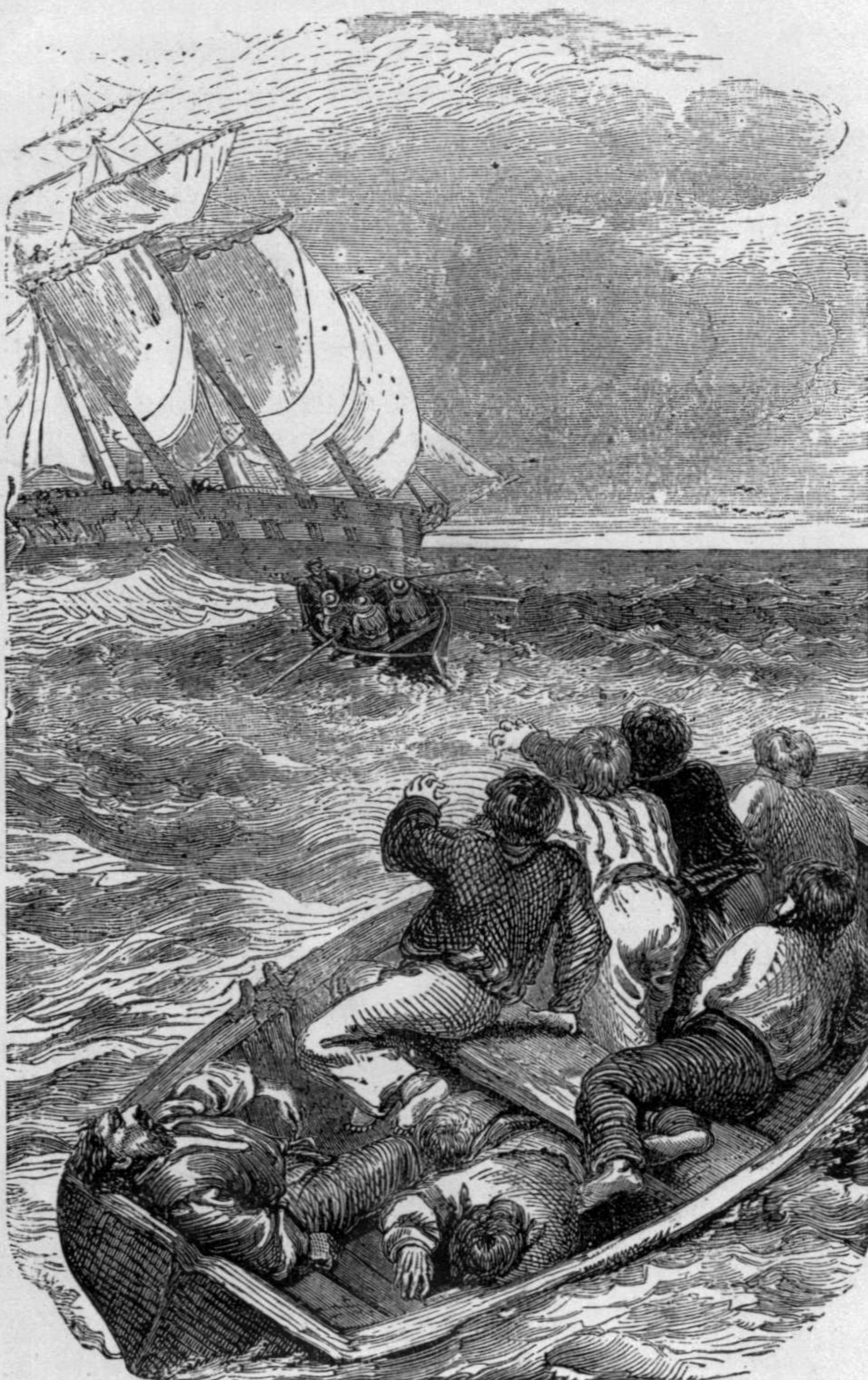
a dark-bearded soldier-like man looking up at the house, as if surprised at its appearance. The stranger passed through the wicket ; Mary could sit quiet no longer. She rose and opened the front door: "James, James, is it you?" she cried out, as if yet fearful that she might be mistaken.

"Yes, Mary, I am James, but not the James who went away in disgrace a few years back," he said, when she had led him into the parlour. "But tell me, do you forgive me? Does my uncle forgive me?"

"Oh, yes; yes—all is forgiven, long, long ago. It will give your kind uncle a new life, to see you back safe and well."

Together, in a few minutes, they set off to the farm. Mary was right. No father could give a more hearty welcome to a prodigal son than good Farmer Grey gave to his nephew James.

James had gained rank and marks of distinction, and he had a pension for wounds, and a considerable share of prize money. His rank and honour showed that he had been firm in resisting the many temptations to which he must have been exposed, for no soldiers escape them. He got his discharge, but entered a militia regiment that he might be able to defend his country, should she ever be attacked by foreign foes. He and Mary married; and no more happy and prosperous couple were to be found in or near Hillbrook. They were so, because they were "diligent in business, fearing the Lord."



SAVED AT LAST.

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TOM TRUEMAN, THE SAILOR; OR, LIFE AT SEA IN A MERCHANT VESSEL.

CHAPTER I.

It was a sad, sad day for poor mother and all of us, when father was brought home on a hurdle, the life crushed out of him by a tree which fell right down where he stood.

He never spoke again. We lived in Dorsetshire, not far from the town of Poole. Father was a day labourer; he had never saved a sixpence. His club buried him, and we were left to live as we could, or to go to the workhouse. Mother said that she would never do that, and with God's help she'd try to feed and clothe us. She found it very hard work though.

There were ten of us. Jane, who was sixteen, and just going into service, was the eldest, and little Bill, who was in arms, was the youngest. I was the fourth child.

Farmer Denn took Sam, who was a strong lad, and Jack went to Mr. Sweet, the grocer in the village, who wanted an errand boy. Jane got a place as maid-of-all-work—and very hard work it was.

was the only one besides who had the chance of gaining a penny, except little Ben, and as he was a sharp chap, he used to be set to scare away the birds, with a clapper in his hands, and such-like work ; but to be sure he did not make much.

So mother had six children to feed and clothe, we may say, and all of us more or less to clothe, for even sister Jane could not do without help.

When father was alive we elder ones went to school ; so I knew about the sea, and a few things in foreign parts, which I had read of in books. One evening when Sam and Jack came home, I said to them, “ This will never do ; mother mustn’t work as she does, it will kill her. I’ve made up my mind to go to sea. May be I shall be able to make money, and send her home some. I’ve read of lands where people, just with a spade and pick, dig up gold as we should potatoes. I’ll see what I can do.”

Sam, who was just a quiet, steady lad, and did his tasks as well as any boy at school, laughed, and said that I might dig a long time before I should get gold enough to fill my pocket.

Still I thought and thought over the matter, till at last I told mother that I had made up my mind to go to sea, and hoped soon she would have one mouth less to feed.

She looked very sad when she heard me say this, but I told her not to grieve, and that I would soon be back, and that it would be all for the best.

That’s what father used to say, “ It’s all for the best,—God knows what’s best for us.” I’ve stuck to

the same ever since. Blow high or blow low, when the ship has been driven by the wind towards the rocks, and all on board have thought we were going to be lost, I've said the same, "Trust in God, He knows what is best for us." What's more, I've always found it come true.

Mother saw things in the same way at last, and gave me her blessing, and told me to go into Poole and see what I could do for myself.

I found a number of vessels alongside the quays on the banks of the river. I went on board one and then another and another, but the men I saw laughed at me. Some said that boys were more trouble than use, that they were always in the way when they were not wanted, and out of it when they were wanted, and that I had not a chance of being taken. At last I thought I must go back to mother and see if Farmer Denn can give me work. I had got to the very end of the quay, and was turning back when I met a gentleman, whom I had seen several times as I was coming on shore from the vessels. He asked me in a kind voice what I was looking for. I told him.

"Come in here, and we will see what can be done for you, my lad," he said.

He took me into an office or sort of shop, full of all sorts of ship's stores. In it were seated three or four men, who were, I found, captains of vessels. My new friend having talked to them about me, one of them asked, "Would you like to go to sea with me, boy?"

“ Yes, sir,” said I, for I liked the look of his face.

“ You don’t ask who I am, nor where I am going,” he said.

“ For that I don’t care, sir ; but I think you are a good man, and will be a kind master,” I answered boldly.

“ Ah, well ; you must not be too sure of that,” said the captain. “ I do not sail from here, but from a place on the other side of England, called Liverpool, and I am going a long, long voyage, to last two or three years, may be.”

I said that I should like that, because I should then be a good sailor before I came back again. He then told me that Liverpool, next to London, is the largest place for trade in England, and that thousands and thousands of vessels sail from it every year to all parts of the world. He was going back there in a few days, where his ship was getting ready for a voyage to the Pacific Ocean, and very likely round the world.

The Pacific, he told me, is a very large spread of water on the other side of America, many thousands of miles long and wide. First we should have to cross the Atlantic ocean, off there where the sun sets. That is also many thousands of miles long and wide. On the farther side is America. We should have to go round the south point of America, called Cape Horn, to get into the Pacific. The Pacific is full of islands, generally a number of small ones together, then a wide open space, and then more islands. A ship may sail on, though, for days together and not see land.

Some of these islands are very low, only just above the water, and are made of coral, and others have high mountains in them. Some of these throw up fire and ashes, and are called volcanoes.

I was much taken with all Captain Bolton told me (for that was the gentleman's name), and as he was not to leave Poole for two days, there was time for me to go back and see mother and brothers and sisters.

Mother and the rest cried very much when they found I was really going, but when she heard what a nice man Captain Bolton was, she cheered up a bit. One lady sent her three shirts for me, and another a pair of shoes, and Farmer Denn, who had a son who was lost overboard at sea, sent me a whole suit of the lad's clothes. People were very kind.

To my mind there are a good many kind people in the world, if we did but know where to find them.

I won't tell about the leave-taking. I don't like, even now, to think about it.

Captain Bolton took me with him round in a brig to Liverpool. The little vessel was tossed and tumbled about, and as I had nothing to do except to think of myself, I was very sick. If I could have left the ship and gone back home when I once got on shore, I would have done so. Captain Bolton told me that I was only getting my inside to rights, and that I should think nothing of such work when I had been a few weeks at sea.

Ships are named after people and all sort of things. Captain Bolton's ship was called the *Rose*. She had

three masts, and a crew of thirty men, with six big guns, for we were going to some curious, out-of-the-way places, and might have to fight the savages, I was told. She had three mates besides the captain, and another officer called a boatswain, who had a good deal to do with managing the men. As soon as I got on board, the captain told me to go to him, and that he would look after me. His name was Alder.

The ship was nearly ready for sea, with most of her cargo on board, so that we had not long to wait till we bid good-bye to Old England.

I wish that I could make those who have never seen a ship understand what one is like. Sailors call a ship she, and often speak of her as the old girl. Our ship was built of wood, longer than most houses, and covered in by what we call a deck. At the fore end there was a place for the crew to live in, called the fore-peak, and at the after-end rooms or cabins for the captain and officers. All the rest of the ship was filled with cargo and stores. To the masts were hung across spars, or poles, as big as large larches, and on these were stretched the sails, made of stout canvas. It required the strength of all the crew to hoist one of these yards, and that of eight or ten men to roll up, or furl, one of the larger sails. Then there were so many ropes to keep up the masts, and so many more to haul the sails here and there, that I thought I should never learn their names or their uses.

From the day the captain put me under charge of

Mr. Alder, he seemed never so much as even to look at me, but I know that he really did not forget me.

I had learned something about sea-life, going round from Poole to Liverpool, so that I was not quite raw when I went on board the *Rose*. There were two other boys who had never before been on board ship, and as I had been a week at sea they looked on me as an old sailor. The rest of the crew did not though, and I was told to run here and there and everywhere by any man who wanted a job done for him. Still I had no cause to complain. The captain was strict but just, made each man do his duty, and the ship was thus kept in good order. I set to work from the first to learn my duty, and found both Mr. Alder and many of the men ready to teach me. In a short time I went aloft, that is climbed up the masts, and lay out on the yards to reef sails as well as many older seamen. At first it seemed a fearful thing to be high up on the yards with only a rope to hold on by, or may be only my elbows, when my hands were wanted and to look down and see only the hard deck and the foaming water, and to know that if I fell on the deck I should have my brains knocked out, or into the water that I should be drowned, for at that time I could not swim. Climbing the highest tree you ever saw is nothing to it, for a tree is steady, and there are branches above and below, and if you fall you may drop on the soft ground. Still I did not think very much about it, and soon it was just the same to me, whether I was on deck or aloft.

No man can be idle on board ship, and if a man

thinks that he can sit on a cask all day at sea, kicking his heels against it, he will soon find out his mistake. There is always work to be done about the masts or spars or rigging, while there is no end of ropeyarn to be spun at all odd hours.

The two boys I have spoken of were Toby Potts and Bill Sniggs. Toby was a sharp little chap, Bill a big, stupid fellow, the butt of the crew. Toby made them laugh by his fun, while they laughed at Bill for his stupid mistakes. Bill was stronger than either Toby or me, and could thrash us both together, so that we did not often play him tricks. When we did, the men used to stand our friends against Bill.

Sometimes all three of us used to be sent aloft to furl the royals, which are the highest sails on the masts.

One evening there was the cry of "All hands shorten sail," which means all the sailors are to help take in the sails. Each man has his proper post, so that all know where to go. We three boys ran up the rigging, up we went in the gloom of coming night, the wind whistling, the sea roaring, the ship pitching. We had rope ladders, shrouds they are called, to help us for most of the way. We could just make out the men hanging on the yards below as we lay out on our yard. As Bill was a strong chap we soon had the sail rolled up and ready to send on deck. Toby and I had done our work, when Bill, who was clinging round the mast, caught hold of us both.

"Now, lads, I'm going to have my revenge. You

promise never to chaff me again, or I'll let you both drop down on deck, or into the sea, may be. In either case you'll be killed, and no one will know it."

His voice did not sound as if he was in joke.

"Which is to go first," I asked.

"You'll let us say our prayers, Bill," said Toby, who always had a word to say.

"Will you chaff me?" cried Bill, in a fierce voice.

"Of course we will—only let us go," said Toby.

Bill thought that Toby meant that he would not chaff him, for he let us both go, and we lost no time in slipping down the rigging.

This was the beginning of a storm, the first I had been in.

I did not think that any thing made by man's hands could have stuck together as the big ship did, tossed and tumbled about as she was.

We told no one of what Bill had said, but we did not play him any more tricks for some time to come.

CHAPTER II.

You all know what a storm on shore is when it seems as if the windows must be blown in, or the roof taken off, when the walls shake, and big trees are torn up by the roots and thrown down. At sea the wind blows up the water into large hills with foaming tops, which seem to rise and leap on every side, or to come rolling on towards the ship as if

they would knock her to pieces, or drive her under them. Instead, she mounts up the hills of water, and a deep valley is seen far below her.

All sail was taken in, and our big ship ran before the wind, tossed about as if she were a mere wash-tub. Above our heads were the dark driving clouds, on every side the rolling, foaming, roaring waves. Not another sail did we see, while the nearest land, we knew, was hundreds of miles away. Often and often I thought that the waves would catch us, and send us all to the bottom. Then I remembered what father used to say, "Trust in God; He knows what is best for us. If he thinks that it is best for us all to be drowned, His will be done." So when I was ordered to turn in, I went into the little narrow cupboard sort of place, which was my berth, and slept as soundly as if the ship was in harbour. Our crew was divided into two watches, that is to say, one half of us were on deck at one time, and one half at another, except when all hands were called. When it was again my watch on deck, I found the ship flying on as before, with the same dark sky above and tossing waves around me. On she drove, rolling from side to side, and pitching into the seas as if she was going down under them. I could not stand on the deck for a moment without holding on to a rope or the bulwarks. Still I liked to watch the big, dark, green waves, as they rose and tumbled about. Even the old sailors could do very little, and it was hard work for the cook to keep the pots on the fire to cook our food.

Things had got somewhat worse when Toby crawled up to me.

“I say, Tom, don’t you think that we be all going to be drowned?” he asked, his teeth chattering with fear and cold.

“I hope not, but I do not like the look of matters,” I answered.

“No, they are very bad, depend on it,” he said. “I heard some of the men telling Bill Sniggs that he’d better repent of his sins, for that may be in a few hours he wouldn’t have much chance.”

“Perhaps they were only joking him,” said I.

“Oh no, they looked too grave for that,” said Toby. “It’s very awful.”

While we were speaking a fierce squall struck the ship. There was a loud crash, and a cry of “Stand from under.” And down came the fore-topmast and all its rigging; the ropes flying about our heads, and the spars nearly striking us. I thought that it was all over with us, and looked to see if Toby had been carried away, but there he stood clearing himself, as I was doing, from the ropes.

The men, led by the mates, had work enough to clear the wreck of the masts, and to get the spars stowed away. I should have thought that we were in a bad state, but the officers and men took matters very coolly, so I hoped that all was right.

Not long after this a ship was seen ahead. They said that she was a large ship with some of her masts gone, and that a flag was flying which showed that she was in distress—that is, in a bad way—like to sink.

We soon drove down to her. There she lay in the trough of the sea. I heard Mr. Alder say that she was twice as big as we were, that there were soldiers on board with their wives and children, but that we could give her no help. As we drew near, we saw a number of men at the pumps, working away for their lives. Some fifty soldiers or more stood ready drawn up to take their places. There were many more people on deck. They stretched out their hands as they saw us come near. It made my heart bleed to think that we could give them no help, but if we had tried to lower a boat, our own people would have been lost.

For the first time I saw some of our men change colour. They had good reason to do so, for it seemed as if we should drive right against the ship and send her to the bottom and ourselves also. As it was, we passed so near that we could see the look of fear in the faces of the people, and could hear their piteous cries.

She had not a boat remaining, and had a raft been formed, the people would have been swept off in that raging sea.

No, there was no hope for a single being on board. Still they might live on in that state for hours.

I was thinking how sad it was for them when I heard a cry, and saw on a sudden the big ship lift up her bows out of the water. The people rushed forward; many were caught by the sea and swept away. It mattered little even for those who gained the fore-castle,—down, down went the ship; and then I rubbed

my eyes. The tops of her masts were seen above the waves ; they too sunk, and for some minutes there was not a sign of her left. In those few short moments all the men and women and children who were on board had lost their lives, and were called to stand before God.

Here and there a spar, or a plank, or a hencoop, or grating floated up, but not one person could we see.

On we flew. We could have given no help ; none was wanted.

“ Many a tall ship has gone down in the same way when no one has been near to see it, many another will thus go down,” said Mr. Alder, who was standing near me. “ It should teach us sailors to be ready to go up to God at a moment’s call ; ay, and landsmen too, for who knows who may next be called.”

I often after that thought of Mr. Alder’s words.

The storm lasted six days. After that we got light winds, and soon crossed what sailors call the line. Not that there is any line or mark on the earth or sea ; but as the world is round, and turns round and round the sun, as an orange with a stick through it might be made to turn round a candle, it is that part which is nearest the sun. The sun at noon, in that part, all round the world, is overhead, and so it is just the hottest part of the world. It was hot, indeed. The pitch bubbled out of the seams in the decks, one calm day, and we could have fried a beefsteak, if we had had one, on any iron plates on the deck. I was glad when, after running for a thousand miles or so, we got cooler weather, though the sun was still hot

enough at noon. Our ship was very well found, the men said, and we had no lack of food—salt beef, and peas, and rice, and flour, and sometimes suet and raisins for puddings. They said we were much better off than many ship's companies; we had enough of good food, and our officers were just, and did not overwork us.

I heard tales of what happens on board some ships, where the food is bad and scanty; the men are worked well-nigh to death, often struck by the master and the mates, and treated like dogs. I was thankful that I hadn't gone to sea in one of those ships.

At last I found we were going round Cape Horn, which is the south point of America. We had a fair wind, and not much of it; but a gale had been blowing somewhere, for there was a swell, such as I had never thought to see. The water was just like smooth up-and-down chalk downs, only as regular as furrows in a field. The big ship just seemed nothing among them, as she now sunk down in the hollow, and then rose to the top of the smooth hill of water. To our right was seen Cape Horn itself; it is a high head of land, sticking out into the sea, all by itself. Very few people have ever been on shore there, and no one lives there, as there is no ground to grow anything, and the climate is cold and bleak. You know that the two ends of the earth, or poles, as they are called, the north and south, are very cold; ice and snow all the year round, and Cape Horn is near the south end.

After we passed it, for some time we steered north.

and soon got into warm weather again. You see the hot part of the world is midway between the north and south pole, so sailing north from the south pole we find it hotter and hotter, and so we do sailing south from the north pole. We find our way over the sea, far away from land night or day, just as well as on shore. Besides the sun and stars to guide us, we have the compass. It is a wonderful thing, though it is so simple-looking; just a round card, resting on a spike in a brass basin. In the card is a long steel needle, and the point of it is rubbed with a stuff called loadstone, and it takes the card round and round, and always points to the north. The north, and all the other points, are marked on the card; so when we look at it we see what way the ship's head is. The ship is guided by a rudder, and a compass is placed just before the man who steers, that is, turns the rudder—this way or that—so that he can look at it, and know which way to turn the rudder, and so to keep the ship on her course.

Then the shape of all parts of the world is mapped down on paper, and the distances, that is to say, an inch on the paper, may be, stands for fifty miles, and so the captain knows where he is going, and how far he has to go, though he has never been there before. We have a log line, with marks on it, and by letting that run out astern we judge how fast the ship is going; then the compass tells us the course she is steering, that is, the way she is going, and that we call "dead reckoning." But the captain has besides wonderful instruments of brass and glasses, and he

looks through them at the sun, or stars, and moon, and then he makes sums on paper ; and then he has some curious watches, which never go wrong, and with them and his sums he can tell just where the ship is, though we haven't seen land for six or eight weeks, or more. It is curious to sail on day after day, and week after week, and not to see land, and yet to know that it is all right, and that we shall reach the very port we are bound for, unless we fall in with a storm, and lose our masts, and get cast away, or spring a leak and founder ; but then when we come to think of the thousands of ships at sea, and that not one in a hundred gets lost, we needn't count on that. So you understand, what with the "dead reckoning," and the curious instruments I told you of—one of them is called a sextant—the captain can take his ship right across the pathless ocean, just as easily as a coachman does his coach along a high-road. You see sailors on shore, and they seem often harum-scarum, idle fellows, but at sea everything is done with the greatest order, and every man and boy has his proper duty, just as the servants in a large country-house. The crew are divided into watches, called the starboard and larboard, or port, watches ; the chief mate commands one, the second mate the other. While one watch is on duty the other goes below to sleep, or take their meals, except when all hands are wanted on deck. Every hour a bell is struck to show how time goes. Every four hours the watch is changed, except in the evening, from four to eight o'clock, when there are two watches,

called dog-watches, that is to say, from four to six, one; and from six to eight, another. The reason of this is that the people who are on watch at one time one night, may not be on watch the same time the next night, which they would be if there were six instead of seven watches, which you will find there are in the twenty-four hours. I used to be very glad when my first watch was over, and I was able to turn in from twelve to four, when I had to be up again to keep the morning watch. That was no idle time, for as soon as it was daylight we had to scrub and wash down decks, and to put everything in order for the day, just as housemaids put the house in order.

Night and day, fine weather or foul, a man is stationed either at the mast-head, or yard-arm, or forward, to keep a look-out ahead for any ship, or land, or shoals, or rocks, which may be near. Many a ship has been lost when a good look-out has not been kept; one ship has run into another, and both have sunk, or the ship has run on rocks not seen till too late.

When we get near the land we use a lead and line, to learn the depth of water. This is called heaving the lead, as the lead is swung round with the arm to fall far a-head. There are knots on the line a fathom apart, which we can tell by the feel.

When a ship gets in shallow water, she can anchor; but in storms the waves are so high, and the wind so strong, that she may be torn from her anchors and driven ashore.

When a ship gets into harbour, the sails are furled,

and the anchors dropped, but even then a watch is kept on deck.

When we got to the south of the line, we saw that the stars overhead were all different to those we see in England. I marked one set of stars more than all the rest. It is called the Southern Cross. The world is round, and there are thousands of stars and other worlds round us, on every side, all made and kept in their places and governed by God. I often thought of that as I stood on deck at night, and felt that the same great God was loving and caring for me, a poor sailor-boy.

CHAPTER III.

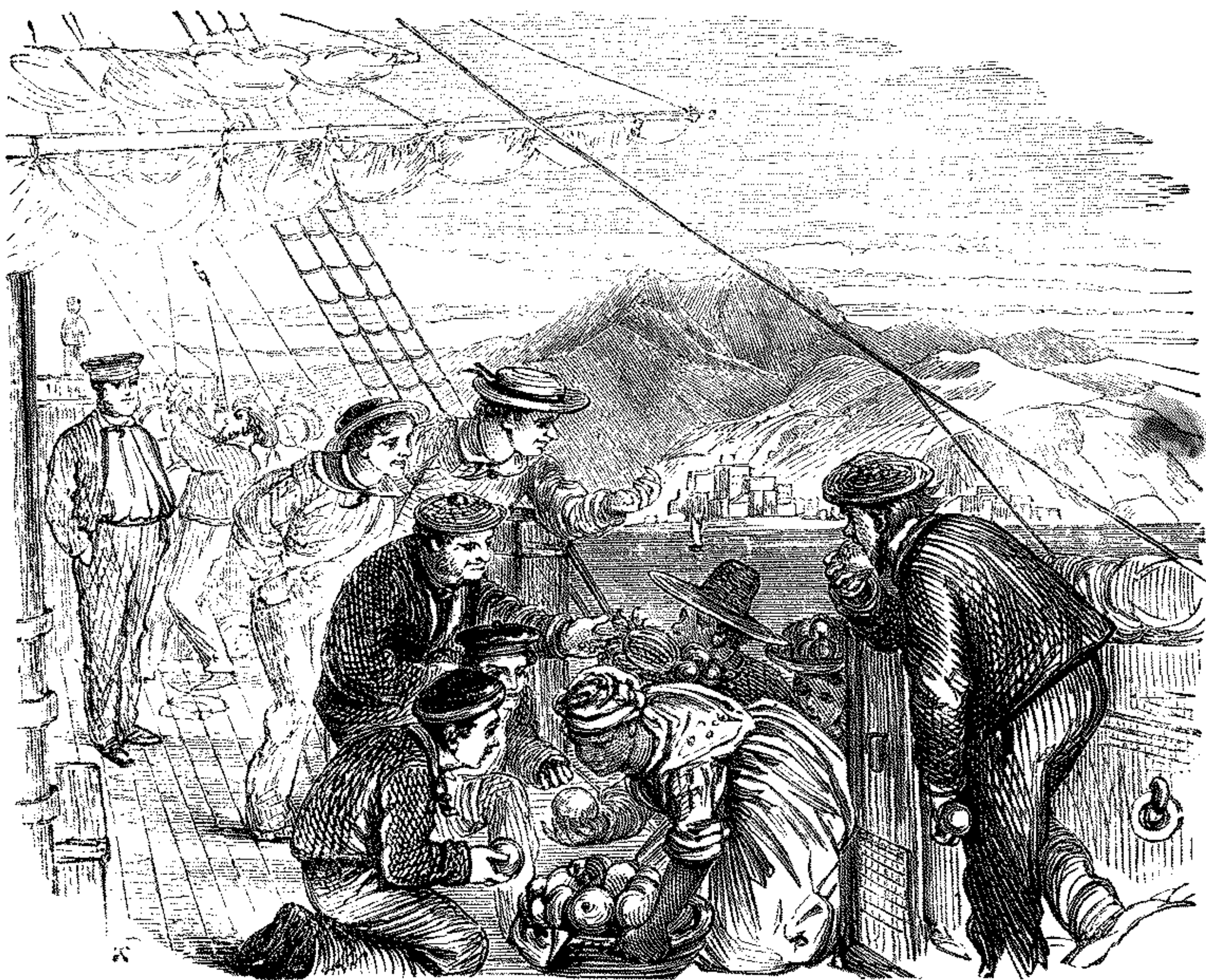
“LAND HO! land ho!” I heard the man at the fore-topmast-head shout out. He pointed to the east. There, as the sun rose, we saw quite clear a long line of blue mountains, some of the highest on the face of the globe, so I should think, for we were then well-nigh fifty miles off them.

It seemed curious after sailing west so long, to see land on the east; but then you will understand that we had gone also south, and then west, and then north again, round a point—a pretty big point to be sure—I mean Cape Horn.

We had had a fresh breeze all day, but it was almost dark before we dropped anchor in the bay of Valparaiso, or the Vale of Paradise, as it is called. It is the chief port in the country of Chili, and

some way inland is the capital, called Santiago. As soon as the anchor was down we were divided into three watches, which gave us all a longer time in bed, no small boon to us, who had been watch and watch so long.

The next morning I was on deck early, to have a look at the land. It is very hilly and rocky close to the sea ; and away inland, the high mountains I spoke of run up towards the sky. This is a very hot country, and so the land looked parched and dry ; but I was told that in winter it is green and fresh. The country once belonged to Spain, and all the chief people in it are born of Spanish fathers and mothers. The people all talk Spanish, though the poorer classes



have come from the native Indians, and many have had Spanish fathers. They were very civil; and some of the boatmen talked enough English to make us know what they wished to say. They brought us plenty of fruits, which they sold cheap—oranges, and grapes, and figs, and melons, and water-melons. The water-melon they eat a great deal of, and it is very nice in a hot country as theirs is. It is as big as a man's head, with a hard, green rind, and in the inside is what looks like pink snow, with a sweetish taste, and black seeds.

The people wear all sorts of curious dresses, but what I remember best were their cloaks, called *ponchos*, which are square pieces of coloured cloth, with a round hole in the middle for the head to go through; and their leggings and their high straw hats.

They are Roman Catholics; that is, they call the Pope of Rome the head of their Church. I saw several processions of priests, in gold, and scarlet, and purple, and yellow dresses, and figures as big as life carried on men's shoulders, and flags, and crosses. The priests walked under a piece of coloured silk, stretched out at the ends of four gilt poles, carried by men in red and white dresses. And some rang bells and chanted, and others swung to and fro carved silver baskets, with sweet-smelling stuff burning in them, and others long, wax, lighted candles; and when the people saw the chief priest, who carried what I was told was the Host in his hand, they fell down on their knees, and they did the same when

the figures passed, and crossed themselves, and some of them beat their breasts and cried out. There were also a number of boys, dressed up in silk of many colours, with silver wings, to look like angels ; but some of the young monkeys made faces at me and Toby, and laughed, and seemed to think the thing a joke. I thought that we had got into a Christian country, but I now found that they were little better than idolaters, for I remembered the commandment, “Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image. . . . Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them.”

I read not long ago of what happened in the largest church in the capital city, Santiago, not far from this. Nearly two thousand of the principal ladies, and other women of the place, and many children, and a few men, were collected to worship the Virgin Mary and her image, and the whole church was lighted with paraffine oil—the roof, the pillars, the sides. Suddenly some hangings near the figure of the Virgin took fire, and soon the whole church was in a blaze. Some of the priests ran off through a small side-door with their trumpery ornaments, leaving the poor women and children inside. On the heads of these the burning oil came pouring down. A few, but very few, were got out at the front door ; but those trying to get out trampled down each other, and blocked up the door. The greater number were burned to death. I never tell of my visit to Chili, without thinking of the fearful scene in that burning church.

The watermen in the bay go out to sea in a curious sort of way. Two skins of seals, or some other large animal, filled full of air, are lashed together at one end, the other ends open like a man's legs stretched out; and the waterman, who sits astride on the ends lashed together, which forms the bow of the boat, works himself on with a paddle, which has a blade at each end. He holds it in the middle, and dips first one end and then the other into the water. These skin boats, if boats they are, are called *balsas*. Sometimes the watermen quarrel, and one sticks his knife into another's *balsa*, and as soon as he does so, the man whose *balsa* has been cut has to strike out for his life towards the shore, for the wind soon gets out of it.

The captain got through the business which took us to Valparaiso, and once more we were at sea, bound for Callao, the chief port in Peru. Near it, inland, is Lima, the capital. Peru reaches nearly all the way from Chili, along the coast, to the north part of South America. All the upper classes are Spaniards; that is, born of Spanish parents, while the rest are native Indians, or children of Indians, of a yellowish-brown colour.. The natives had once their own kings and princes, and were a prosperous and wealthy people. They had cities and roads, and tanks for water, and well-cultivated fields.

Rather more than three hundred years ago the Spaniards arrived in the country, and cruelly killed most of their chiefs, and enslaved the people, and have ruled the country ever since. At last the

Spaniards born in the country, rose on the Spaniards who had come from Spain, and drove them away. It is now free, that is, governed only by people born in the country, and has nothing to do with Spain.

We had been three days at sea, when a strong gale from the east drove us off the land some hundred miles. The crew grumbled very much, for it would take us, they said, a fortnight or more to beat up to Callao, and they were eager to have fresh meat and fruit and vegetables, instead of salt beef and hard biscuits, which was now our food.

A sailor's food on a long voyage is salt beef and pork, and biscuits, and tea, and cocoa, and sugar, and sometimes flour, with raisins and suet for a pudding, which is called "duff." If, however, they live too long on salt food, they get a dreadful complaint, called scurvy, which fresh vegetables only can cure. I was far better fed than I had ever been on shore, yet often I longed for a cabbage and a dish of potatoes, and would gladly have given up the beef and pork to get them.

I had now become a pretty fair seaman, and was placed aloft to keep a look-out for strange vessels, or land, or rocks, or shoals. I had my eyes to the north, when I saw what I first thought was a cask. I hailed the deck, and then the second mate came up and said that it was a boat. The ship was steered towards it. I could see no one moving, and thought that it must be empty; but the mate said that he saw some men's heads above the gunwale. He was right, for suddenly, as if he was just awoke, a man

stood up and waved a shirt, and then others lifted up their heads and waved their hats ; but the first soon sunk down again, as if too weak to stand. As we drew near they again waved their hats, and we saw their mouths moving, as if they were trying to cheer, but their voices were too weak to reach us. We made out five men, who had just strength to sit up and lean over the side. We hove to ; that is, we placed the sails so as to stop the way of the ship, and lowered a boat, for the waves were too high to make it safe to take the ship alongside of the boat. I jumped into our boat. Never shall I forget the thin, miserable faces of the poor fellows in the boat. Besides the five sitting up, there were three others lying on the bottom, so far gone that they scarcely seemed to know that help had come to them. There was not a morsel of food, nor a drop of water on board. Their boat, too, was so battered and rotten, that it was a wonder it was still afloat. One or two of the strongest tried to speak, but couldn't, and burst into tears as we got alongside ; some of the rest groaned, and pointed to their mouths, as if we wanted to be told that they were starving. As we didn't like to try even to tow their boat, we lifted them out gently into ours. Some of them, though pretty big men, were as light as young boys. We left their boat, and pulled back to the ship as fast as we could, for there was no time to lose. Two of these poor fellows, indeed, must have died in the boat, for they were corpses when we got them on deck. If we had been left to ourselves, we should

have killed them all with over-feeding; but Captain Bolton would allow them at first only a spoonful or two of weak brandy and water, and then a little arrowroot, and afterwards some soup; but not for some hours would he give them any heavy food, and even then a very little at a time. The result of this wise treatment was that in a few days two of them—the second mate and another man—were able to crawl about the deck, and that they all in time recovered.

They were part of the crew of a whaler, the *Helen*, which with nearly a full cargo of oil had caught fire, some six hundred miles to the westward of where we found them. They had remained by the ship to the last, and then taken to the boats. But scarcely had they lost sight of her, when a fearful gale sprang up, and the second mate's boat lost sight of the rest. They had, as soon as the gale was over, steered for a certain island, which they missed, then for another, which they missed also. Then they had tried to reach the coast of Peru, but they had had calms and foul winds, and their water and food came to an end. Four had died before we found them, and the rest would not have lived many hours longer. Such is one of the many dangers to which sailors are exposed. I little thought at that time that I should one day be in the same sad plight. This makes sailors ready to help each other, for they know that some day they may themselves be in a like state.

The evening after this we sighted two sail, that is, we saw two vessels just as the sun was going down.

The weather at the time looked threatening, but the wind was more fair than it had been for some time, and the captain did not like to shorten sail, as he was in a hurry to get to Callao. Toby Potts and I were in the first watch. The captain was on deck. On a sudden he sang out sharply, "All hands, shorten sail! Two reefs in the topsails. Furl top-gallant sails."

This last work was to be done by Toby and me. Up the rigging we ran. "Let's see which will have done it first!" cried Toby.

I had given the last turn round my sail, and looked up to try if I could see through the gloom what Toby was doing, and thought I saw something fall from aloft. Toby was not on the yard. Just then I heard the cry from the deck of "A man overboard!" The ship had given a sudden lurch or roll to leeward. I slid down a backstay to the deck. Without a moment's thought I seized a hencoop loose on deck, and threw it overboard. The gale which the captain had seen was coming, at that instant struck the ship. Over she heeled, till it seemed that she would never rise again. Like a mad horse she rushed through the water. Sails were flapping, ropes flying and lashing, and blocks swinging round here and there.

It was impossible to heave-to to lower a boat, and poor Toby was left to his fate. I felt very sad when I found this. I wondered why it was that I was not taken instead of Toby, but just then I had not much time for thinking. All on board had work enough to do. The captain gave his orders in a clear voice, and rope after rope was hauled taut, and the sails

were furled, that is rolled up, except the fore-topsail, which was closely reefed. With that alone set, we ran before the hurricane. I had heard that it is always smooth in the Pacific Ocean, but I now found out my mistake ; though perhaps there is more fine weather there than in any part of the world. I could not tell where we were running to all in the dark, for we could not see ten yards ahead of the ship, but I supposed the captain knew ; still, after hearing of the many islands and rocks and shoals in those parts, I couldn't help thinking what would become of us. The truth was that the captain could do nothing else ; he could not heave-to, and he could not see the dangers ahead, so he had to trust to God's mercy ; and that's what, in many of the affairs of life, not only sailors but people on shore have to do. I heard him say to Mr. Marston, the first mate, "We've done our best ; we are in God's hands, and He will never desert those who trust in Him."

No one went below that night, for all knew the danger we were in. On we flew, hour after hour, the wind in no way falling. I was thankful when daylight appeared.

Day came on quickly. A hand was now sent aloft to look out for dangers ; the first mate followed him up. Scarcely had he got to the masthead than he cried out, "Breakers ahead ! breakers on the starboard bow !"

The helm was put to starboard, and the mizen-topsail was set close reefed ; the yards braced up, and the ship's head turned to port, away from the

threatened danger. On she dashed, the sea breaking over the bows and sweeping across the decks, so that we had to lash ourselves to the rigging to prevent being carried away. The breakers seemed terribly close. I could see that if the ship once got among them, she would soon break to pieces, and not one of us could escape.

The captain stood by the helm quite calm, watching the masts and spars, and giving a look every now and then at the reef, parts of which we could see between the white foaming breakers. Slowly it seemed we passed the reef. He took a long breath when it was at last seen over our quarter. The helm was put up, the mizen-topsail furled, the yards squared away, and once more we ran before the gale. The wind fell at night, though the sea ran very high and the ship tumbled about more than ever.

Not till ten days after this did we enter the bay of Callao, the port of Lima. We could see in the distance, as the sun sank towards the west, the tall spires of the city of Lima high up on the hills, while far above it rose the lofty mountains called the Andes, on the tops of which snow ever rests. More than a hundred years ago, an earthquake threw down a great part of Lima, and a large wave rolling in, swept over Callao and utterly destroyed it. The new town we saw is at a distance from where the old one stood, and has three castles to defend the bay. I heard a great deal of the silver mines of Chili and Peru, and the quantities of silver which used to be sent from them to Spain. Each bar of silver was, however,

gained by the tears and groans, and often the death, of the poor natives, who were forced by the cruel Spaniards to toil in those mines. Many hundred thousand Peruvians have died in them since the Spaniards discovered the country. Spain, I have read, has never been the better for her ill-gained wealth, and now she does not own an inch of land in all America.

CHAPTER IV.

WE had now landed all the goods we had brought from England, and found that we were to sail for Canton, in China, to procure a cargo of tea, which, it was understood, we were to take to Sidney, in New South Wales, and there to receive on board a cargo of wool to carry home.

That we might not go empty to Canton, we were to visit some islands, where seals were to be caught, for the sake of their skins; and also some others farther west, where we were to collect sandal-wood. We had no reason to complain of the treatment we received on shore; but, though the climate is a fine one, and food plentiful, I am thankful that Old England is my home.

Once more we were steering west, but we went greatly out of our proper course to look for the island where seals were to be procured. It was not exactly marked down in the chart, and we were some time looking for it, having twice passed without seeing it.

About three hundred miles away was another island, where a party of men had been left by another ship belonging to our owners, to catch seals, and we had received orders to take all the skins they had prepared, and to carry them to Canton, but the men were to be left another year.

The captain, not finding the first island, was about giving up the search, when, as I was aloft, I saw a small blue speck a long way off, just rising out of the water. I shouted out, "Land ho! Land ho!" The first mate, who had charge of the deck, was soon up with me. The ship was steered for it; it was the island we were looking for.

We anchored in a bay on the western side, the only one which afforded any shelter. The whole island was surrounded by rocks, with here and there patches of trees and shrubs; but most part of it was barren. It would have been a sad place to be cast away on. As there was no time to be lost, we at once went on shore under charge of the second mate, with the carpenter and his crew, to cut clubs for killing the seals, and stakes on which to hang up their skins to dry. The second mate, Mr. Hudson, when a lad before the mast, had been here, and knew the best spot where the seals came on shore. It was a deep sandy bay, with rocks on either side.

We went the next day to the nearest spot to the bay at which we could land, and hauled the boats up on the beach. We then hid ourselves among the rocks, half on one side of the bay and half on the other, with our clubs in our hands, ready to rush out

among the seals at a sign from our officer. After waiting for an hour or so, the seals began to come on shore; the old males and females on either side, and the young ones in the middle, in ranks as regular as soldiers on parade. The first rank worked their way on nearly forty yards from the water, and the rest followed as close as possible. The sun was very hot, and they soon fell asleep, except the old ones, who were stationed on either side to keep guard. The mate kept us back for half an hour or more, saying that they were not sound enough asleep. A seal is a curious animal, of nearly a black colour, with a head something like a dog, with whiskers; a round, smooth back; flappers, which serve as feet, on either side; and a large tail, like that of a fish, divided in two. By the help of the tail and flappers they move quickly over the ground. At last the mate lifted up his hand as a signal for us to begin the attack. We slid gently down the rocks, and got between the seals and the water. The instant they saw us, the old watchmen roared out a signal of alarm. It was too late. We began dealing blows with our clubs on either side as the seals tried to slip past us into the water. What with the roaring of the old ones and the yelping of the young seals, the shouts of our men, and the sound of our blows, there was a fearful din and uproar. A tap on the head settled the young ones, but the old seals died hard, and there was no little danger, if a man fell, of being torn to pieces by them, as their mouths are as large as lions', with sharp tusks. A seal's eye is like that of a young

calf, and looks as gentle and sensible as that of a favourite dog. We kept on killing as long as a seal remained on shore. We then set to work to skin them, and to hang up the skins on the frames we had prepared. We had killed eight hundred seals, which was very smart work.

We skinned away till the evening, when we went on board, as the captain would not let the ship be left without us, in case of the weather changing, and being obliged to run out to sea.

The next morning we went again on shore and finished the work. As we had some hours to spare before dark, we strolled about the island, our chief object being to search for water.

We saw several bays, where the seals were likely to come on shore, and numerous bones of the sea lions, another larger sort of seal. I heard a shout ahead, "Hollo! what have we here?" Looking up, I saw a shipmate pointing to a hut at some little distance. We ran towards it, but drew back as we got near; for there, in the very doorway, were two skeletons, the head of one resting on the lap of the other. So they had died, the one trying to help the other, and too weak, after he died, to get up. By the furniture of the hut, and the implements in it, they were certainly sealers, who had been left there by their vessel, which had been probably lost. They, Mr. Hudson thought, had died of scurvy, caused by want of fresh meat and vegetables. Two or three of our men shed tears when they saw the sight. I do not think that the sight of a dozen men scattered

about dead would have drawn a tear from their eyes. It was the way these two poor fellows had died that touched us.

We had to remain five days, while the skins were drying, and then made sail for the island where we expected to find the sealers. Four days passed before we sighted it. As we drew near, a flag was seen flying from a staff on the highest point. As there was no anchorage ground, we were obliged to heave-to under the lee of the island ; that is, on the side opposite to that towards which the wind blows. To heave-to is, as I have said, to place the sails so as to prevent the ship from moving much. As soon as this was done, two boats were lowered, and provisions and stores of all sorts put into them. We pulled in between two rocks, and on the beach found six men ready to welcome us. They looked a savage set, but they gave us a hearty welcome ; some almost wrung our hands off, others nearly squeezed the breath out of our bodies, and then they leaped about, and clapped their hands, and laughed and cried like children. The reason was this, that, three days before, they had eaten up the very last morsel of food they had ; and as no seals had come to the island for some days, they had had nothing but a few shell-fish to eat. If we had not arrived, they would have been starved. They had made up their minds that such would be their fate, when the topsails of our ship appeared above the horizon.

They had been watching our sails all day, hoping that we should come near, yet fearing that

we might pass at a distance, and not see them. They were too weak to help unload the boats; but when they had tasted of a good meal, which we quickly prepared for them, they gladly lent a hand to carry the things up to their store.

It might be supposed that, having so nearly suffered death from want of food, they would have been eager to get away; but they did not seem to think of that. They were contented to remain, now that they had got a good supply of food, till their ship should call for them. They had prepared four thousand skins, which we spent the whole of the next day in getting on board. A more desolate spot it would be hard to find; and yet these men were content to remain another six months or more on it, with the chance, after all, of their ship being lost, or, for some other cause, not coming in time for them. Two of them could read, but strange it seemed, they had no books, and were very thankful for six or seven volumes which we left them, one of them being a Bible.

We felt very sorry to leave the poor fellows all alone, more sorry than they felt for themselves. Our course was now towards some islands in the western Pacific, where we hoped to obtain sandal-wood. This sandal-wood is used by the Chinese, in their temples, to burn as incense before their idols; for they are great idolators. It seemed to me that if we took them wood to burn before their idols, we were, in a way, helping them in their idolatry; but I could not get others to see the matter in that light.

CHAPTER V.

WE now passed several coral islands. One we saw quite near was about six miles long, with a large lake in the centre, with an entrance to it from the sea. Outside the island, about a quarter of a mile off, was a narrow reef, just rising above the water. The sea breaking on this was prevented from washing over the island.

These coral islands are really made of coral; and made, too, by a little insect. It begins on the top of a rock far down under the water, where it makes a house for itself; then it builds another above that, and so on, till it reaches the surface. It cannot build out of the water; but sea-weed first grows on it, and anything floating is caught by this, and stops; and then birds rest on it, and drop seeds, which take root. Then the sea washes bits of coral up from the outer edge, and thus a firm mass is formed, which rises higher and higher, as more trees grow and decay, and more coral is washed up. A sandy beach is formed of broken coral, and tall cocoa-nut trees grow up and bear fruit, and other fruit-trees and vegetables and roots grow, and people come and live on the island. There are many islands in the Pacific Ocean which have been formed in this way, and which have long had people living on them. Some, however, are rocky, and have high mountains in them. Many of these have been thrown up by the means of fire, and are still burning mountains. Some are very beautiful, and have valleys and

streams and fountains and rocks and trees of all sorts, and shrubs, and support a large number of people.

We were becalmed near one of them ; and as we wanted water and fresh provisions, and the people were said to be well-disposed, the captain determined to send on shore. Two boats were manned and armed, in case of accidents, and with a supply of goods to barter (cotton handkerchiefs and knives and hatchets), we pulled in. There was a reef outside, against which the sea broke, and, rising up, curled back in a mass of foam. We, however, found a passage through it, in which, though it was very narrow, the water was smooth.

“Give way, lads,” cried Mr. Hudson, who was in the leading boat. I was with him. We pulled hard. A large roller came on after us. The water foamed up on either side, and in an instant it seemed we were in smooth water.

Numbers of people—men, women, and children—were on the beach to receive us. They were of a light-brown colour, and wore very little clothing. The women had short petticoats, and some of the men wore cloaks, besides cloths round their loins. These clothes, I found, were like thick paper, and are made out of the bark of a tree called the paper-mulberry tree. It is steeped in water, and beat into cloth with wooden mallets by the women, and afterwards dyed of various colours. The men were armed with clubs and spears, but seemed very friendly. There were several houses near the shore, built of

poles made from young cocoa-nut trees, and thatched with large leaves. The sides were made of mats, which are drawn up in the daytime to let the wind blow through them, as the climate is very hot in winter as well as summer. As soon as the goods were landed, they were carried up to a house near the beach, which was the natives' trade-house. Here they brought all sorts of things which they thought we should want, mostly roots and fruits and vegetables and hogs, of which there seemed to be a large supply. Mr. Hudson, seeing all things ready, began a brisk trade. While it was going on, Bill Sniggs, who had come in the boat with me, asked me to take a stroll with him, as he was sure that we should be back again to go off in the boat.

"But it is against orders for any one to quit the beach without leave," said I.

"Oh, not here; the people are friendly, and nothing was said about it," he answered.

"True enough, no harm can come of it, and I don't mind going a little way," I said, though I knew well enough that the order stood good for this place and all others. Still I wanted to see the country, it looked so very tempting.

We walked on and on; now we climbed up a hill, from which we could see the ship, and then crossed a valley, and went along a clear stream up to a beautiful waterfall. We passed a good many cottages of the sort I have described, and the people came out and offered us fruits and cooked roots, like sweet potatoes and pork. We couldn't help going into

some of the houses, the people were so kind ; besides, we were tired, as we hadn't taken such a walk since we came aboard the *Rose*. We neither of us had a watch, and never thought how the time went. When we were rested, we got up, and, thanking the people of the house for their kindness, went on our way, the country seeming more and more beautiful.

At last I said to Bill that I thought we ought to go back ; so we turned our faces, as we fancied, towards the place we had come from.

We went on some way, and then I stopped Bill, and said, " Bill, I don't think we are right ; we are farther off than ever."

We looked about to find a hill to climb, to judge where we were, but the trees were so thick that we could see none. One thing we saw, that the sky was changed, and that clouds were passing quickly across it, and that the tops of the trees were bending to a strong breeze.

" Bill," I said, " we ought to be back at the boats, for they'll be going off ; we shall taste the end of a rope if we keep them waiting."

" Never fear, we shall be in time enough, answered Bill. " Why be put out ? we can't help ourselves."

That was true enough, then, but I knew that we ought not to have come at all.

We went on some way till we came to another house. The people in it were very kind, but we couldn't make out what they said, and they couldn't what we said, though we tried to let them know that

we wanted to find our way back to the boats. At last a young man seemed to understand what we wanted, for he took us by the hand and led us on.

After some time we found that we were going up a hill, and when we got to the top of it we could see the ocean. We looked, we rubbed our eyes ; a heavy sea was rolling in, and far away our ship was beating off shore. For some time I could not speak a word.

At last I said, "Bill, I fear we are left ashore, unless one of the boats has stopped for us."

"Very likely that we are left, Tom, but not at all likely that one of the boats has stopped for us," he answered. "Worse if she has ; for we shall catch it soundly when we get on board. Take my advice, let us keep out of the way and not go back at all. This is a pleasant country to live in, much better than knocking about at sea."

"No, no, I'd rather get a dozen floggings than leave the ship, and not go back to Old England and see poor mother and brothers, and sisters again. Haven't you got a mother and brothers and sisters, Bill ?"

"Yes, but they don't care for me," he answered.

"How do you know that ?" I asked. "Depend on it, Bill, they love you, and care for you, and may be this moment are praying that you may be kept free from danger. Come, at all events, let us go back to where we landed, if we can find the way."

Our new friend stood watching us while we were talking, and when we pointed to the ship he shook his head, to show that we couldn't get aboard her ;

but when we pointed down to the shore he again took our hands and led us on. We must have wandered by ourselves a long way, for we were some time getting to the beach. There was not a sign of our shipmates ; we tried to ask where they had gone, but the natives hung down their heads and looked sorrowful.

“Bill, something has happened,” I said ; “we must try to find out what it is.”

Our friend seemed to understand us better than the rest, so we asked him to learn from them what had happened. After much talking with his friends, he showed us by signs that the ship had fired a gun, and then another, and another, and that the white men had hurried to the boats and shoved off ; that the largest boat with Mr. Hudson had got out safe, but that the smaller one was upset ; some of the people in her were drowned, and others swam out, and were picked up by the large boat.

This was, indeed, sad news. Which of our shipmates have been lost ? which of them have been saved ? we asked one another. I had felt that if the boats had gone without us, Captain Bolton would not forsake us, but would put back to take us off as soon as he could. Now, however, he would suppose that we had been lost, as very likely no one would have observed that we were not with the rest, when they jumped into the smaller boat to pull on board.

“Oh, Bill ! Bill ! here we are left among savages ; may be we shall never get away, but have to spend all the days of our lives with them,” I cried out in a mournful tone. Bill began to cry, too.

“Why, not long ago you wanted to remain,” I could not help saying.

“That was when I thought that we should be flogged, and were sure to go away,” he answered.

“Do you know, Tom, I’ve heard say that some of these people are cannibals; that is, they eat human flesh. Perhaps when they find that the ship is gone, they’ll kill and eat us.”

I said I hoped not, but still I didn’t feel very comfortable; for I knew what he said was true.

There was now, however, no help for it. “Captain Bolton will believe that we are lost, and when he gets home let our mothers know, and we shall be mourned for as dead,” said I.

“They won’t mourn for me, and I don’t care,” said Bill.

“They will mourn for me, and I should be very sorry if I thought they wouldn’t,” said I. “Ay Bill, often at night, when the storm has been raging, and the sea running high, and it seemed as if the ship would go down, or might be cast on some hidden reef, I’ve gone to sleep quite happy, knowing that mother would be thinking of me, and praying for me, and that there was One who hears our prayers, watching over me.”

We were sitting down under some trees, on a hillock above the beach, from which we could still see the *Rose* beating off under close reefed topsails. After some time our friendly native came up and sat down by us. After a time, he signed to us to get up, and led us back to his house. Our friend, we found,



was the son of the greatest chief in the island. When we got back to the house we had a supper of fish and pork, and bread-fruit and other vegetables were placed before us. In the middle of the house, as soon as it was dark, a fire of dried cocoa-nut leaves was lighted, and round this the family collected. What was our surprise to see the young chief bring out of a chest a book, and begin to read. I looked at it, but though the letters were English, it was in his own language. Then they all knelt down, and prayed, and sang a psalm. I knew it by the tune.

“Why, Bill, I do believe these people are Christians,” said I.

“So I suppose, Tom, if it is the Bible they are reading,” said Bill.

“No doubt about it,” I said; “that’s the reason they treated us so kindly. I’ve heard that missionaries have been out in these parts, and they must have been here, and taught these people to be Christians.”

“If they are Christians, Tom, then, may be they won’t kill and eat us as we thought they would,” said Bill, in a more cheerful voice than he had spoken in before.

I couldn’t help almost laughing as I answered, “They would be odd sort of Christians if they did; but I’ll tell you what, they’ll think us very odd sort of Christians if we don’t kneel down, and say our prayers with them. We needn’t be afraid that any one will laugh at us, as we might have been aboard the *Rose*.”

“I can’t say prayers, never learned,” said Bill; “you never saw me saying them aboard the *Rose*.”

That was true; but mother had taught me to say mine, and I said them in my berth, or to myself on deck, or wherever I could. I thought Bill might have done the same. I felt that we were put to shame by these poor savages, as we called them. So I begged Bill to try and say a prayer, but he said he couldn’t, he didn’t know what to say. I asked him if he could say what I did, and so we knelt down, and he said prayers after me. The natives seemed pleased, and the young chief nodded his head to show that we had done what he thought right. I

don't say there would have been any use in the form, or if I had done it merely to please the natives, but I really did pray to God as truly as I ever did, but I own that, in a way, the natives shamed me into it.

There was an old chief and his wife and two daughters, and three other lads, besides our friend. They had all much more clothing on than the other people we had seen, and were more quiet in their manners. As soon as prayers were over, they hung up large pieces of native cloth from the rafters, reaching to the floor, so as to form a number of little rooms. Mats were laid on the floor to form the bedding, and pieces of cloth served as coverlids. The pillow was a curious affair, being a thick piece of bamboo, about four feet long, on little legs. We were shown into one of these rooms, and a sign made to us to go to sleep. Even the largest houses have not a nail in them, but are fastened together with sennit, which is a line made from the root of a tree. I may say that everything is fastened with sennit—canoes, as well as houses—so that large quantities are used.

We slept very soundly, having no longer any fear of being cooked and eaten. In the morning, as soon as it was daylight, the whole family was on foot, and before anything was done they had prayers, as in the evening; the young chief leading and reading more out of the Bible. As soon as that was over, they all set about their daily work. The men and boys went into the fields to cultivate the taro and other roots, on which they live; while some of the women got out their mallets and boards to make the native cloth;

others employed themselves in plaiting mats and baskets, which are so fine that they will hold water. Bill thought that he was going to be a gentleman, and do nothing, as he said ; but I said that if we didn't work we could not expect to be fed, and made signs to the young chief that we were ready to help him. He smiled ; perhaps he thought that we couldn't do much, and certainly we could not hope to do anything as well as the natives did. They seemed to me a very clever people, considering the small means they had. They have now iron tools, but they showed me those they had before the English came to the island, very neatly made of flint and shells and bones. They made fish-hooks and spears, and many other things, of bones. We soon learned from the young chief how to work in the fields, and to do a number of things, and it was a pleasure to work for him, he was always so good-natured and kind. By degrees, too, I learned his language, though Bill could not make much hand of it. I wanted to know how it was that he and his people had become Christians, and where the missionary lived who had taught them. At last I spoke well enough, with the help of signs, to ask him. I should have said that his name was Matua. He told me also, with signs and words, that the missionary lived in an island some way off, and that he, Matua, had been there several times, and was soon going again to fetch a native missionary, or a preaching man ; that one had been on the island, but that he was a very old man, and had died some

time before we came. He told me that he had a canoe preparing for the voyage. I asked him if he would let us go with him, for that I should like to see the missionary, who was a countryman of mine, and that I might, through him, write home to my friends in England.

“Would you like to go to them again, or live on with me?” he asked.

“I like you very much, but I love my mother and brothers and sisters much more, and if I have the chance, I shall try to go back to them,” I answered.

“Very right,” he said, “but I shall grieve to lose you.”

The canoe was, at the time we first saw it, nearly finished. It was built like the houses, without a single nail, but all the planks were sewed together with sennit. It was about forty feet long, and scarcely thirty inches wide. It had a gunwale, and ribs and thwarts to keep it in shape. A thick gum was put at the seams to prevent the water getting through. Being so narrow it would have upset, but it had an outrigger, which is a plank, or log, as long as the boat, pointed at the fore end. This rested on the water five or six feet from the canoe, and was kept there by poles, fastened across the canoe. This was always on the lee side, as the canoes can sail both ways, stem or stern first. At one end there was a deck, under which they kept their provisions, and on the top of which the chief sat. The men to move it had short paddles, like sharp-pointed shovels, and sitting with their faces to the bows, dug the paddles

into the water, which they sent flying behind them. We were very sorry to part from many of our friends, but still the thoughts of seeing a white man again, and hearing our native tongue spoken, made us glad; besides which, I hoped that somehow or other I should have the chance of getting home.

CHAPTER VI.

WE had got a good supply of provisions and water, in the canoe, and I understood that the voyage might take us four or five days, or perhaps more. The island looked very beautiful as we sailed away from it, and I did not wonder that Matua loved it so much. His love for it made him undertake the voyage to fetch a missionary, for what he loved more than its beauty were the souls of the people in it, over whom he ruled. For two days the sea was smooth and the wind fair, though there was very little of it. When it fell calm, we paddled on at a good rate. On the evening of the second day, the sky looked threatening. Soon after the next morning broke it began to blow very hard, and the sea soon got up, and tumbled the canoe about in a way which I thought must upset her, or send her to the bottom. The sail was lowered, and while some paddled lustily, others, helped by Bill and me, baled out the water, of which we shipped a great deal, though none came through the seams. This showed how strongly it was built. The canoe was kept

head to the seas, but we made no way, and it was very clear that we were driving before the gale,—not back to Matua's island,—though where we were going we could not tell. Matua sat steering as calm as possible. He said that he put his trust in God, and did not fear the storm. He and his people were doing all that could be done to preserve their lives, and that if it was God's will that they should die, they were ready. I should say that they had prayers and sang psalms morning and evening, and that they prayed and sang now, only of course they could not stop paddling or bailing, or kneel down. Yet many white persons would have called these people savages. It gave me an idea of the good the missionaries have done in these seas.

Though I had seen what a storm at sea is on board the *Rose*, I did not think how terrible it was in a narrow canoe of thin planks just sewn together. My wonder was and is that we did not go down, or break to pieces.

Five days we drove on before the gale. Twice we saw land in the distance, but did not dare to try and reach it, indeed we could not if we had tried. The wind then fell, and the sea went down, and then we lay floating on the water, but the men were too weary to paddle any more. Our food also had grown very short, though we had eaten only just enough to keep life in us. It seemed a doubt whether we should have enough to reach one of the islands we had seen. After sleeping for some hours, the crew seized their paddles, and we began to paddle back

the way we had come. The next day it was a dead calm, and we saw right ahead a large vessel, barque rigged. Bill and I both thought she was English and Matua agreed to go alongside. As we drew near, I saw that she was a whaler from the cut of her sails, from her being high out of the water, and the number of boats shaped stem and stern alike. We were now alongside. I told the captain, who asked us what we wanted, how we had been driven out of our course, and begged him to tell me how we could best reach Matua's island.

"As to that, you have been driven three hundred miles to the westward of it, if it's the island I fancy from your account," he answered. "It will take you a pretty long time to get there; but I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll give the canoe a tow for a couple of hundred miles, and then take my advice,—do you ship aboard here; I shall be bound home in six months or so, and you won't have a better chance of getting there. If you wish to serve your friends, you can let your wages go in payment: I can't undertake to help these savages for nothing."

The last part of this speech did not please me, but still I did not think we could do better for ourselves or for Matua; so, after talking it over with him, we agreed to Captain Grimes' offer. I first bargained that some food and water might be given to our friends, for had I not done so, I fear that they would have had a scant allowance. To tow is to drag a boat or vessel by a rope through the water. We now went aboard the ship, which was called the *Grampus*,

She was a very different looking craft from the *Rose*, and her officers and men were a very rough lot. The wind was fair, and the canoe towed very easily. Still Captain Grimes grumbled at having to take her so far. At last I said that I was ready to go back in the canoe if he wished to be off his bargain. I found that he really wanted us, as one of the ship's boys had died of fever, and another had been washed overboard with two of the men. "No, no; that will not do," was his answer. "I'll take the savages as far as I promised, and you two lads shall stay aboard."

On the evening of the third day, Captain Grimes said that he had towed the canoe the distance promised, and that she must be cast off. Matua and our other friends were very sorrowful when they parted from us. Captain Grimes gave them some flour and water and biscuit and bread-fruit, and told them how to steer for their island. The canoe was then cast off. From that day to this, I have never been certain whether the island the captain spoke of was Matua's own island, or whether he reached it at all. I know that numbers of canoes are blown away from the land, and that some reach strange islands far, far off, where their crews settle, but that others are lost with all on board.

The *Grampus* was a vessel of 350 tons,—much smaller than the *Rose*—but she carried a larger crew. She had six boats, and each boat had a crew of six men. Often all the boats were away together, so that, besides the thirty-six men in them, more

were required to manage the vessel. The boats are about twenty-seven feet long, and four broad, and sharp at both ends. In each boat are two lines, 200 fathoms long, coiled away in tubs. In the end of one, an harpoon is fastened. This is a short spear, and is shot out of a gun like a blunderbuss. There are several such harpoons, and two or three long lances; besides, a lantern, light-box, some small flags, and two or more "drougues," which are square bits of board to be fastened to the harpoon line, in order to hinder the whale when sinking or swimming away.

It was some time before we fell in with a sperm whale.

Men were stationed at the mast-head and yard-arm, on the look-out for whales, from sunrise to sunset; but it was two weeks before we got to our fishing-ground. One day, at noon, while those on deck had their eyes on the galley, waiting for dinner, we were aroused by a cry from the mast-head, of "There she spouts."

"Where away?" asked Captain Grimes.

The man pointed to the west, and there, not half a mile off, a thin jet of water was seen rising from a dark object, which we soon saw to be a huge whale, as long as the ship.

"There again," cried the crew, as once more the jet rose high.

Three boats were lowered; everything was kept ready in them. The crew slid into them. Away they went in chase, singing—

"Away, my boys; away, my boys: 'tis time for us to go."

We watched the chase from the deck.

“He is going down,” cried one.

“No ; he spouts again, he spouts again,” we all cried, as another jet rose in the air.

“Yes ; but he’ll be down again,” said an old whaler.

Still the boats dashed on, as if it was a matter of life and death. The chief mate was in the leading boat. He had reached the whale just as the monster gave a sign that it was going down. The oars were thrown up ; the harpoon, shot with certain aim, sank deep into the monster’s side. A cheer rose from the men in the boats—we on board took it up. At the same moment the whale began to strike furiously with its huge tail, right and left, beating the water into foam. One of the boats was struck, and knocked to pieces, and the crew had to swim towards the other boats ; another was upset, but the crew hung on to her as if they were accustomed to it, and righted her. One of them got in, and baled her out ; the oars and other articles were picked up, and away they pulled in chase. The whale, meantime, had sounded ; that is, gone down towards the bottom. A two-hundred-fathom line was run out, and another fastened on ; a third was called for from another boat, and a fourth was about to be added, when the line became slack—the whale was rising. A whale breathes the air like a land animal, and therefore cannot remain under water many minutes at a time. Were it not for this, it could not be caught and used by man. The line was hauled in, and coiled away in the tub. Up came

the whale at some distance, and off it darted at a great rate, towing the fast boat, the others following. But he became wearied with loss of blood and the weight of the boat. One of the other boats got up, and a lance was plunged into him ; then another, and another. Again he began to lash about furiously—the boats backed away from him. He made one leap, right out of the water, and then lashed his tail more furiously than before. Then he once more went down, but only for a short time. He soon appeared—swam slowly on—then the death-struggle came on. It was fearful to look at. Every part of the monster quivered and shook, and then he lay dead—our prize.

The sperm whale we had taken is very different to the Greenland whale of the North. It had a blunt nose, like the bottom of a quart bottle ; thin, pointed lower jaw ; the eyes very far back, and a hump on its back ; the tail or flukes being set on flat with the surface of the water, and not up and down, like the Greenland whale. This one was eighty-four feet long, and thirty-six feet round the body, or, suppose it had been cast ashore, it would have been about fourteen feet high. The head was of great size ; it was nearly a third of the length of the whole creature, and about nine feet deep. The head alone contained no less than a ton, or ten large barrels, of spermaceti. The dead whale was towed alongside the ship. The head was cut off, and secured astern, that the oil might be dipped out of it. Hooks were then made fast to each end of the body. Men, with

ropes round their waists, and with spades in their hands, go down on the body of the whale. A large blunt hook is then lowered at the end of a tackle. The man near the head begins cutting off a strip of the blubber, or the coating of flesh which covers the body. The hook is put into the end of the strip, and hoisted up; and as the end turns towards the tail, the body of the whale turns round and round, as the strip of blubber is wound off. When this is done, the carcass is cast loose, and the head is emptied, and let go also. On the deck are large cauldrons; the blubber is cut up into small pieces, and boiled in them. Part of the blubber serves as fuel. Taking off the blubber is called "cutting in," and boiling it, "trying out." At night, when "trying out" generally goes on, the deck of a whale-ship has a strange and wild look. The red glare of the fires is thrown on the wild, and I may say, savage-looking crew, as they stand round the cauldrons, stripped to the waist, their faces black with smoke, the large cutting-out knives in their hands, or the prongs with which they hook out the blubber, all working away with might and main; for all are interested in getting the work done. The crew of a whale-ship share in the profits of a voyage, and all therefore are anxious to kill as many whales as possible. There is no bad smell in trying out, and the work is cleaner than might be expected.

The ship was very nearly full, that is, our barrels were nearly full of oil, and the crew were beginning to talk of the voyage homeward, and of the pleasures

of the shore, when one night as the watch below, to which I belonged, was asleep, we were awakened by the fearful cry of "Breakers ahead!" followed by a grinding noise and a shock which made the whole ship quiver through every timber. We rushed on deck. She was hard and fast on a coral reef.

CHAPTER VII.

"Hold on for your lives," shouted the captain as a huge wave, dimly seen through the gloom of night, rolled on towards us. It broke with fearful force against the ship, washed several of our poor fellows overboard whose shrieks were heard as they were carried away to leeward. It threw her on her beam ends, and drove her farther on the reef, and with a crash all the masts fell together. Another and another sea followed and lifted the ship over the reef, where the water was smoother.

"Out boats!" was the cry. "The ship is sinking."

Three of the boats were launched, not without great difficulty; the rest were stove in by the falling masts. We had barely time to get into the boats before the ship settled down till her weather bulwarks alone were above water. We did not know if we were near land, and if near land whether or not it was inhabited. We stayed in the boats near the vessel, hoping that daylight would soon come to show us

where we were, and to enable us to get some provisions, if possible, out of her. It came at last. No land was in sight; only reefs and coral rocks all around, some above, some under the water.

We had no food in the boats, no water; our only hope was that the ship would break up and things float out of her. Each sea which rolled in shook her till it seemed that she must break to pieces. At last her deck was burst up, and we thankfully picked up a cask of beef, another of pork, and some flour and biscuit, and, what was of still more consequence, three casks of water. These things were divided among the boats. There was only one small boat-compass in the captain's boat. He told us to keep close to him, and that he would soon take us to a land where we should find all we wanted. With sad hearts the crew of the whaler left the ship, and the product of their labours for so many months. Bill and I were together with the second mate. We were well-nigh ready to cry, for though we had not lost anything, we were sorry for our shipmates, and we began to think that we should never get home.

For three days the weather remained fine, but on the fourth, as the sun went down, it came on to blow. The sea too got up, and it became very dark. We kept the captain's boat in sight for some time, but she seemed to be going ahead of us. On a sudden we lost sight of her. We pulled on as hard as the heavy sea would let us to catch her up, but when morning broke, neither of the other boats was to be

seen. The sky was overcast, we had no compass to steer by, the sea ran high, our stock of provisions was low, our stock of water still lower. We were in a bad way. There was no one to say, "Trust in God."

The mate was ill before the ship was cast away. He now lost all spirit, and thought that his end was coming. He told us that we were still nearly two hundred miles from land to the south-west of us, and described the stars we should steer by. The next day he died, and two other strong-looking men died within two days of him. The rest of them thought that they should never reach land.

I said at last, "Let us trust in God. Let us pray that He will send us help."

Two of the men answered that God did not care for such poor wretched fellows as they were.

I said that I was sure He cared for everybody, and that He would hear us if we prayed to Him, however poor and wretched we were. I only know that I prayed as hard as ever I did, and Bill prayed too.

Two days more passed away. At night the stars came out, and we steered the course the mate had given us. I was at the helm looking now at the stars, now ahead, when I saw a dark object right before me. It was a ship sailing across our course. I shouted loudly. The shout roused those who were asleep. They all sprang to their oars, and pulled away as hard as their remaining strength would allow, we all shouting at the top of our voices. I saw the ship heave to, and I burst into tears. We were soon

alongside, but without help we were too weak to get on deck.

I heard voices I knew giving orders. Yes, there stood Captain Bolton on the quarter-deck, and Mr. Alder seeing to the boat being hoisted up. Another person stood before me, watching the men helping us up, it was Toby Potts. Now I felt sure that I was in a dream. Toby had been lost so many months before on the other side of the Pacific. He did not know either Bill or me. No one knew us. That made it still more like a dream. I forgot how many months had passed by since we were on board the *Rose*, and that we were well-nigh starved to death.

The captain came round as we sat on the deck, and spoke very kindly to us, and told us that hammocks should be got ready, and that we should have some food as soon as it could be warmed up.

“Don’t you know me, Captain Bolton?” I asked as he came up to me.

He looked at me hard, as the light of the lantern fell on my face. “What! Tom Trueman! I should say, if I didn’t believe that he has long ago been in another world,” he exclaimed; “if it is Tom, I am right glad to see you, lad. Tell me how you escaped death.”

So I told him, and made Bill known, for he was in a fright, thinking that we should be punished for leaving the beach without leave. It did me good to see the pleasure the kind captain felt at finding that we were alive.

By this time some warm turtle soup was brought

ns, and a little weak brandy and water, and then we were carried below and put into hammocks.

It was not till the next day that I was certain I was not mistaken about Toby Potts. He had floated on the very hencoop which I had thrown over to him, till the next morning, when one of the ships which we had seen, hove-to, passed close to him, and picked him up. That ship fell in with the *Rose* two or three weeks after we were supposed to have been lost, and Toby was returned on board. The *Rose* herself had suffered much damage in a gale, and had put into harbour to repair; she had also been some time in collecting sandal-wood, with which she was now on her way to Canton. This accounted for our falling in with her, for I thought that by this time she would have been far on her way home.

We had a fine passage to Canton, or rather to Whampoa, which is as far up the river of Canton as ships go. The mouth of the river is known as the Boca Tigris. The captain kindly took me to Canton; it is a most curious city. On the river are thousands of boats, the greater number not more than fourteen feet long, and twelve broad, and covered over with a bamboo roof. In these whole families live from one end of the year to the other, or rather from their births to their deaths. Then there were junks as big as men of war, with huge, carved, green dragons at their bows, and all sorts of coloured flags. But the most curious sights are on shore. The city is surrounded by walls, and the houses look as if

they were cut out of coloured paper ; the streets are so narrow that only two sedan chairs can pass, and no wheel carriage enters them. At each end of the street are gates, which are shut at night and guarded by policemen. The shops are all open in front, and all sorts of curious things are sold. The people themselves are odd looking, with their black hair in long tails hanging down their backs, and their yellow or blue silk coats, and wide trousers and slippers. The great men walk about under big coloured umbrellas, or else are carried by two men in a covered chair on poles. They are a very industrious, hard-working people, and every inch of land in the country is cultivated. Though they are so clever and neat-handed, and can do many things as well as the English, yet they are idolators. In their churches, or pagodas as they are called, there are ugly images, which they worship. They burn sandal-wood and bits of paper before them, which they fancy is like saying their prayers. The chief thing produced in the country is tea.

When we had landed the hides, seal-skins, and sandal-wood, which we had brought, we took on board a cargo of tea, in chests. With this we sailed for Sydney, New South Wales, as the captain calculated that we should arrive there about the time that the wool produced in that colony would be ready to ship to England. There are many dangers in the seas between those two places. There are typhoons, which are strong, fierce winds ; and there are rocks and shoals ; and there are pirates, mostly Chinese or

a people like them, who attack vessels, if they can take them unawares, and rob them, and sometimes murder all on board. We escaped all dangers, and arrived safely off Sydney harbour. We entered between two high headlands into a large bay or lake, in which any number of vessels might lie at anchor. The city of Sydney is a fine-looking place, with towers, and churches, and large houses, and wide streets, and carriages in great numbers driving about, and vessels of all sorts lying alongside the quays, two or three landing emigrants just arrived from England; and then there are huge warehouses close to the harbour. Into one of them the tea we had brought was hoisted, and out of another came the wool, in large packages, with which the *Rose* was to be freighted. What astonished me was to think that eighty years ago not a white man was living in all that vast country, and now there are large towns in all directions, and villages, and farms, and sheep-stations, and thousands upon thousands of sheep, some of the wool from whose backs we were now carrying home to be made up into all sorts of woollen goods in our factories.

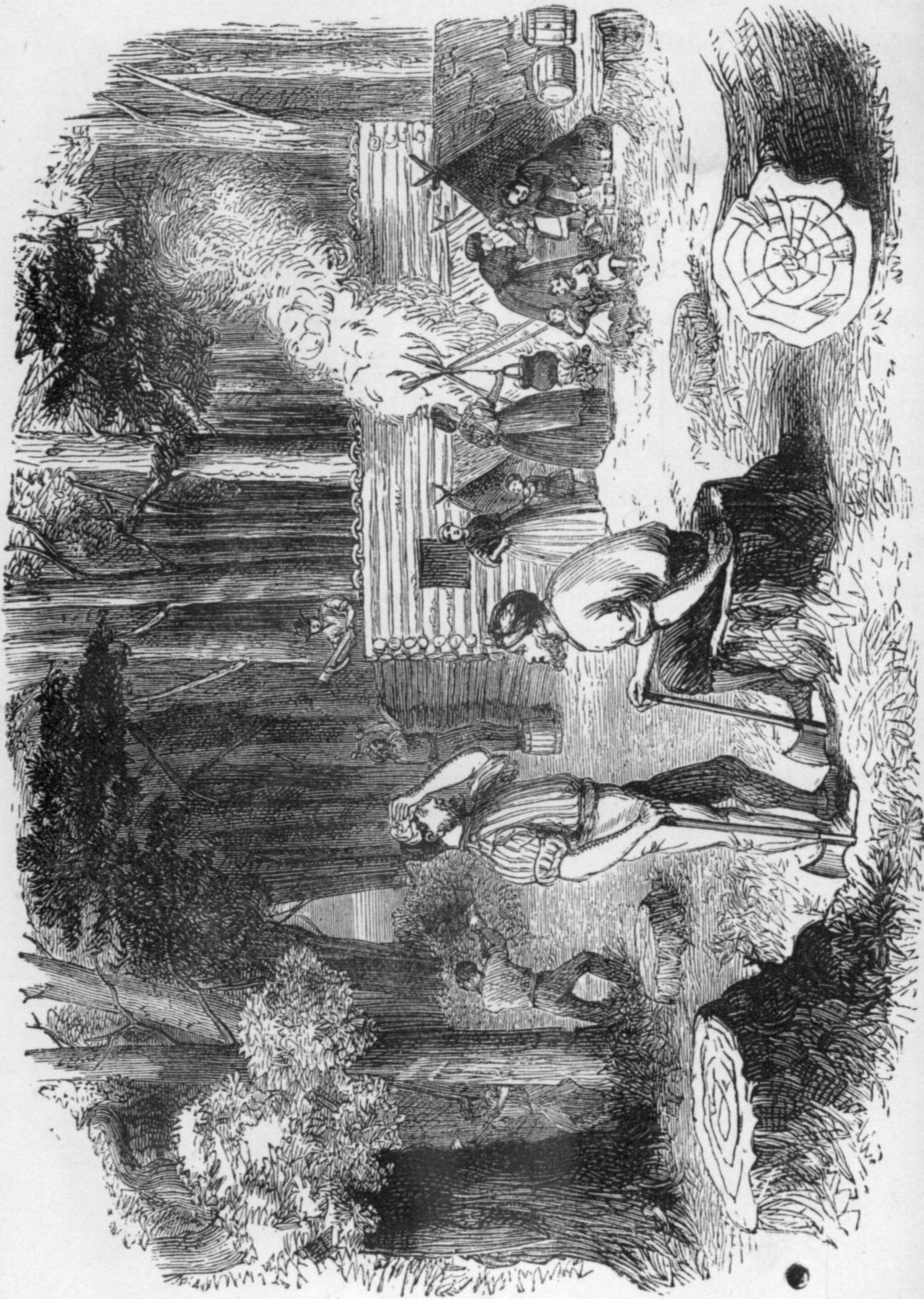
With cheerful voices we ran round the capstan as we weighed anchor, we hoped to remain at our bows till we dropped it in the Mersey. The whaler's people had left us at Hong Kong; at the mouth of the Canton river. They said that we were too quiet for them.

I should like to tell of our voyage home, not that anything wonderful happened. We continued sailing

west till we arrived off the Cape of Good Hope, and then we steered north, for Old England. We arrived at Liverpool in two months and a half after leaving Sydney, and a little more than two years from the time we sailed from England. Captain Bolton called me into the cabin, and told me that he was so well pleased with me that he would take me another voyage if I had a mind to go ; but that I might first go down into Dorsetshire to see mother and my brothers and sisters, and friends. I thanked him very much, and said that I should be very glad to sail with him, and that I hoped to be back any day he would name.

Well, I got home, and there was mother, and Jane come home on purpose to see me, and Sam, and Jack, and little Bill grown quite a big chap, and all of them ; and I blessed God, and was so happy. I had brought all sorts of things from China for them, and others from the South Sea Islands ; and they were never tired of hearing of the wonders I had seen, nor was I tired of telling of them.

Thus ended my first voyage ; I have been many others, but this was the happiest coming home of all.



THE FORTUNES OF MICHAEL HALE

AND HIS FAMILY.

A TALE ABOUT LIFE IN CANADA.

CHAPTER I.

THE sun shone brightly out of a deep blue sky. His rays glanced on the axes of several sturdy men, who with shirt sleeves tucked up and handkerchiefs round their waists, were hewing away lustily at some tall pine-trees. A few had already fallen before their strokes, making a small clearing in the thick forest. Through the trees the glittering water of a lake could be seen, but on every other side the thick forest alone stood up like a dark wall. Yet all that thick under-wood and those tall trees must be cut down and cleared away before the newly arrived settlers would find means of living. It was enough to try the bold hearts of the men as they looked round and saw the work before them. Not an inch of ground turned up, nor a hut built, and winter not so very far off either. Yet it must be done, and could be done, for like work had been done over and over again in the country. The ground rose at first gently and then steeply from the lake, while the splashing sound of a stream on one side gave promise of good water-

power for the new settlement. There were not only firs but many hard-wood trees. Such are those which shed their leaves, maple, birch, oak, beech, and others, all destined soon to fall before the sturdy backwoodsman's axe.

The scene I have described was in that fine colony of Old England across the Atlantic Ocean, called Canada, and in a newly opened district of its north-west part between the great river Ottawa and Lake Ontario.

Old and young were all at work. There were some women and children of the party. The women were busy in front of some rough huts which had been built Indian fashion, something like gipsy tents in England, and covered with large sheets of birch-bark. They were soon made, with a ridge pole, supported by cross-sticks ten feet long. Other thin poles were placed sloping against the ridge pole, and then the birch-bark was put on. The bark comes off the trees in lengths of eight or more feet, and two and three wide.

By the side of the huts casks of provisions, pork, flour, tea, sugar, and such-like things, and household goods, were piled up, covered over with bark or bits of canvas. In front of each hut was a fire, at which some of the women were busy, while others were dressing or looking after the younger children.

"Breakfast ready, breakfast ready," cried out the women one after the other, as they placed ready for their husbands and sons savoury dishes of pork, or beef, and fish, with hot cakes of wheaten flour or

Indian corn, baked in the ashes, to be washed down with good tea, sweetened with maple sugar. Of milk and butter of course there was none. The men soon came in, and sat down on the trunks of trees rolled near for the purpose, with appetites sharpened by their morning's work.

With one of the families we have most to do. The father, Michael Hale, was a broad-shouldered, fair-haired, blue-eyed man, with a kind, honest look in his face. Following him came his three stout sons, Rob, David, and Small Tony, as he was called, and small he was as to height, but he was broad and strong, and so active that he did as much work as any of the rest. He was such a merry happy little chap, with such a comical face, so full of fun, that he was a favourite everywhere.

Two men also sat down to breakfast whom Michael had hired to help him clear his ground.

Mrs. Hale had two stout girls well able to help her, and three smaller children to look after, while her eldest girl, Susan, had gone out to service, and was getting good wages.

"Well, Martha, I hope that we shall have a house ready for you and the little ones in a few days in case rain should come on. We've got stuff enough to build it with," said Michael, pointing to the huge logs he had been felling.

"We do very well at present in the hut," answered his wife, smiling. "I have a liking for it—no rent and no taxes to pay; it is ours—the first dwelling we ever had of our own."

“Ay, wife; and now we have forty acres of land too of our own: little value, to be sure, as they are; but in a few months, when we have put work into them, they’ll yield us a good living,” observed Michael, glancing his eye down his allotment, which reached to the lake. “We shall have four acres cleared, and our house up, before the snow sets in; and if the boys and I can chop three more in the winter, we shall have seven to start with in the spring.”

“You’ll do that, master, if you work as you’ve begun,” said Pat Honan, one of the men Hale had engaged to work for him. “Arrah now, if I had the wife and childer myself, may be I’d be settling on a farm of my own; but, somehow or other, when I go to bed at night, it isn’t often that I’m richer than when I got up in the morning.”

“You won’t have the whiskey here, Pat; so may be you’ll have a better chance. Just try what you can do,” said Michael, in a kind tone.

“Ah, now, that’s just what I’ve thried many a day; and all went right till temptation came in my way, and then, somehow or other, the throat was always so dhry that I couldn’t, for the life of me, help moistening it a bit.”

Pat’s companion, another Irishman, Peter Disney, looked very sulky at these remarks, and Michael suspected that he had often proved poor Pat’s tempter.

Near Michael’s tent there was another, owned by an old friend of his, John Kemp. They had come

out together from the same place in England, and for the same reason. They had large families, and found work hard to get at fair wages. Michael Hale was a day labourer, as his father was before him. He lived in a wild part of Old England, where schools were scarce. He had very little learning himself; but he was blessed with a good wife, who could read her Bible, and she had not much time to read anything else. Michael fell ill, and so did two of his children (that was in the old country); and when he got better, he found that his old master was dead. For a long time he went about looking for work. One day he called at the house of a gentleman, one Mr. Forster, five miles from where he lived.

“I cannot give you work, but I can give you advice, and may be help,” said Mr. Forster. “If you cannot get work at home, take your family to a British colony. I am sending some people off to Canada, to a brother of mine who is settled there; and, if you wish, you shall go with them.”

“Where is Canada, and what sort of a country is it, sir?” asked Michael.

“It is away to the west, where the sun sets, and across the Atlantic Ocean; and a vessel, sailing at the rate of nine or ten miles an hour, takes between twelve and fourteen days to get there. It is a country full of large rivers and lakes and streams, and has railroads running from one end to the other. There is much forest-land to be sold; and a man working for another for one or two years is generally

able to save money and to buy a farm, and set up for himself. The climate is very healthy. The summers are hotter than in England, and the winters much colder. The ground is then covered thickly with snow; but the snow is looked on as a blessing, as, when beaten down, a capital road is made over it, and besides it makes the earth fertile. Everything that grows in England will grow there, and many things besides, such as Indian corn, or maize. Though the summers are short, they are very hot, and corn is quickly brought to maturity. A man must work there, as everywhere, for a living; but if he keeps from drinking, he is sure to get plenty of work, and to be well paid."

"I think, sir, that country will just suit me," said Michael. "I find it a hard matter to get work; and when my boys grow up, it will be still worse."

"Well, think it over," said Mr. Forster. "If you can get work, stay where you are; if not, remember what I tell you, that Canada is a fine country for a hard working, strong man; and that if you determine to go there, I will help you."

Michael thought over the matter, and talked over it with Martha, and they agreed to go. Michael Hale told his neighbour, John Kemp, what he was thinking of doing. When John heard that Michael was going, he said that he would go too, for much the same reason; he had five children, and might have many more; and the day might come when he could get no work for himself or them either.

Michael could not have got out if it had not been

for the help given him by Mr. Forster ; but John Kemp had a cow and calf, two pigs, and some poultry ; and, by selling these and the furniture, he had enough to pay his passage, and some money over. They went to Liverpool, where Mr. Forster took a passage for them on board a large ship, with nearly three hundred and fifty other persons, also going out to settle in Canada.

They felt very strange at first ; and when the ship began to roll from side to side, and to dip her head into the big seas, they did not know what was going to happen ; but it soon got smooth again, and though they were nearly a month at sea, they were not the worse for the voyage. The ship was some days sailing up a large river, called the St. Lawrence, which runs right across Canada, from west to east. They only went up part of the way in her, as far as Quebec, a fine city, built on a steep hill. They thought the high mountains very fine on the sides of the river, and wondered at the curious places where settlers had built their houses. Wherever there was a level spot on the side of the mountains, some quite high up, there was sure to be one or more fields, an orchard, and a cottage. They were told that these were the farms of French people, whose fathers had come over to the country many years ago, when it was owned by France ; and that a great many French still live in the east part ; but that in the west, where they were going, the inhabitants are nearly all English, or Scotch, or Irish. They found that there was an agent at Quebec, a government officer, as well

as at every large town, whose business it is to tell newly arrived emigrants all about the country, how to get up to where they want to go, and to help those who want it.

Michael and his friends went up to Montreal, another large city, in a big steamer. From Montreal they went on sometimes in a railway; then in a small steamer on a river, then on a canal; then across two or three lakes, and again on a river and canal; and then they landed, and went across country in a wagon, and for some miles over a lake, and along a river, in an open boat, till at last they reached the place where Mr. Forster's brother lived. Here Michael and John engaged themselves to serve two settlers, at good wages, for a year; their wives were to cook and wash; their cottages and food were found them; while the children were to go to school, and to help in harvest and other times when they were wanted. Michael and John agreed that they had good reason to be satisfied with the change they had made.

For two years Michael and John worked on steadily for their masters, as did their wives and elder children, getting good wages, and spending very little. They were employed in clearing the ground; that is, chopping down trees, under-brushing, cutting the underwood, building log huts, fencing, ploughing, and digging, road making—not as roads are made in England, though, but with logs and planks—and building carts and wagons, and bridges too; indeed, there were few things they did not turn their hands to.

Now, with fifty pounds each in their pockets, over and above what they had laid out in provisions and stores for the winter, they had come up to take possession of forty acres apiece of freehold land, for part of which they had paid, the rest was to be paid for by a certain sum each year. They had to lead a rough life, but they did not mind that; they knew what they were to expect. They did not fear the cold of winter; for their log houses would have thick walls, and they had large iron stoves with flues, and plenty of fuel to be had for the trouble of chopping. After the snow had fallen, the boys would chop enough in a few days to last them all the winter, and pile it up in a great heap near the house. They had plenty of clothing, and they had found the climate, in summer or winter, as healthy as they would wish.

They were not long at breakfast, and did not give themselves much time to rest, but up they were again, axes in hand, chopping away at the big giant trees which came crashing quickly down one after the other before their strokes.

CHAPTER II.

It seemed a difficult job to get rid of all the trunks now they were down cumbering the earth, after enough were kept for the log-house, and fencing, and firing. The only way was to burn them. It was done in this manner: the largest tree in a group

was felled first, and all round were made to fall across it, others were put above it with handspikes. The boughs and brushwood were placed under and above it, till a huge heap eight feet high was formed. A number of these heaps were made, and when the day's work was done, they were set on fire. It was a curious sight at night to see them all blazing together, lighting up the dark forest, and the faces of the men, and the huts, and those around them. On the first night several new settlers came rushing over to Michael's clearing to learn what was the matter, thinking the forest was on fire. The men had indeed to take care that the flames did not spread to the other trees. The stumps of course remained, and it would take six or eight years before they would rot away. Michael had learned to make potash out of the ashes which he could sell at £7 the barrel.

The log-house, or rather hut, was next built. Four logs were first laid down on the ground to mark out the shape of the hut, the ends being notched to fit into each other. The upper sides of the logs were then hollowed out, so that the next tier of logs fitted into them. These were also notched. In the same way others were placed above these till the walls were of the proper height. The front wall was higher than the back one, so that the roof sloped from the front to the back. There were now the four walls, but no door and no windows. These were sawed out and frames fitted into them. The roof was made of smaller logs. A log was split

in two and hollowed out so as to form a trough. A row of troughs was then put on side by side, sloping from the front wall to the back, the hollow part up. Over the edges of these were next placed other troughs with the hollow down. It was just as rounded tiles are used for roofs in England. The troughs stuck out some way both before and behind to protect the walls. This sort of roof, from being very thick, keeps out the cold in winter, and the heat in summer. The spaces in the walls between the logs were then filled up with clay. A well-made door and thick shutters being fixed up, and a large stove lighted, Michael found even in the coldest weather, that his log hut could be kept far warmer than had been his cottage in the old country. The hut was divided into three rooms, a large one in the middle to serve for the kitchen, the parlour, store-room, and boys' sleeping room ; and one on each side,—one of them was for himself and wife and two youngest children, and the other for the girls.

Michael and his boys made all the furniture out of slabs. The slabs were made in this way : they took a clean straight-grained pine-tree and cut it into logs eight feet long. One end of each was lined out into planks, three or four inches thick, and then split with wedges. They then fixed the plank into notches with wedges between two logs, and smoothed them with the axe and plane. Thinner planks were made out of the white cedar, which splits very freely. The fir planks served for the flooring of their bed-rooms, and for shelves and cupboards.

As they for the first time sat round the table just finished by Michael, they thanked God heartily who had brought them to a country where steady hard work could gain for them so many comforts.

Some of the settlers were not quite so well pleased as Michael. They were not so handy with their tools. John Kemp had more daughters, and had not made or saved so much as Michael. He had no stove, but he made a fire-place after this fashion. Four very wide ladders were placed in a square, a little way from the wall, passing through the roof. In front some of the bars were left out. Clay mixed with straw was then kneaded round the rounds, or steps of the ladders and all the rest of the space between them filled up with clay, so that all the wood was thickly covered. The part where the bars were left out was the front of the fire-place. It drew very well and threw out a great heat.

It was a great thing to have all the stuff for building and fencing on the ground. The fences were made of rough logs piled up one on another in a zigzag form. This is called a snake fence. The stumps were still in the ground. It would take some years to get them out, but Michael knew that he could even plough between those farthest apart, and dig in other places, and that wheat and Indian corn and potatoes were sure to grow well.

Some time before, a road to the settlement had been marked out through the forest. This was done by blazing the trees, that is cutting a piece of bark off each with an axe. Choppers were now set to

work to cut down the trees, and burn them off, but the stumps were left standing, and the carts and wagons had to wind their way along between them. Where the ground was swampy, trunks of trees were placed close together across the road : this is what is called a corduroy road. Other roads were planked over with fir, and called plank roads ; others were of gravel. In all of them the stumps had been grubbed up, or rotted out, or blown up.

Michael's settlement, Thornhill, as it was called, was able to get on pretty well without a road, as it could be reached by the lake and river. Michael and John together made a canoe that they might get about the lake. It was formed from a large log, and hollowed out. The boys learned soon to paddle in it almost as fast as the Indians could. When the winter set in, and the snow lay thick on the ground, roads were made on it by beating it down hard. Over these roads sleighs, that is carts on runners, were able to travel faster than those on wheels.

So hard had Michael and his sons worked, that before the frost set in and the snow came down, they had been able to sow three acres of their ground with wheat, which they hoped would give them a good supply of flour for the next year. "If the season is early, I hope that we may get a spring burn of three or four acres more ;" said Michael to his boys. "Then we'll plant it with Indian corn, and pumpkins, and potatoes, and turnips, and carrots, and cabbages, and onions, and other garden stuff. In a short time we shall not have much to buy in the

shape of food, as soon as we can raise enough for pigs and fowls, and keep a cow or two.”

As yet nothing particular had happened to Michael Hale and his family. They had worked on steadily, and were already reaping the reward of their industry.

CHAPTER III.

BEFORE October was over bad weather came on, and the settlers who had only just come to the country began to cry out that the winter would be upon them before they were ready. They were, it is true, much behindhand, for though many of them had far greater means than Michael Hale and John Kemp, they had not their experience, and often threw away much labour and time uselessly. They were wrong as to the weather, too, for the Indian summer came, and this year it lasted nearly three weeks. The air was pure and cool, though there was not a cloud in the sky, but there was a haze which made the sun looker redder than his wont, and did not let his rays strike as hot as they had done in the summer. It was a very fine time, and the new settlers said that they had seen nothing like it in the old country. The leaves on the trees too changed to all sorts of bright colours—orange and yellow and pink and scarlet and blue—till the wood looked like a big flower-garden; the beech turned to a straw colour; the maple on one side was light green, and on the other scarlet and yellow and pink and many other

colours; the oak became of a dark, shining copper, but there was more scarlet and yellow on most of the trees than any other colour.

Among the settlers was a Mr. Samuel Landon. He was a kind-hearted man, and had good means, but had not had the practical experience which Michael possessed, and which was of more value to him than money. Mr. Landon often came across to Michael's clearing to ask his advice. He and his family had reached Canada at the same time as the Hales. He had lived at the city of Montreal for some time, and spent much money; then he had travelled about the country and spent more. That money would not have been thrown away, but he bought land which he did not like, and sold it at a loss. Now he had bought a second lot. Anybody looking at his and Michael's lot at the end of the fall would have been able to say which of the two was most likely in the course of a few years to be the most prosperous settler.

Still Michael Hale was to have his trials. Few men go through life without them. A letter came from Susan to say that she was ill and wished to come home. She begged that some one would come and meet her. Michael could not leave, and he wanted one big boy to help him, so it was settled that Rob and Tony should go. They had a long journey before them. First the voyage along the lake and down the river, and then a long tramp through the forest of three or four days. There was no road, but the trees were blazed they knew, and they had no

doubt about finding the way. "Fanny sends her love to Susan, and is very glad she is coming home," said Mrs. Kemp, as Rob went to wish her good-bye. Fanny was Mrs. Kemp's eldest girl, and a very pretty, good girl she was. Her next girl, Ann, was not quite right in her mind, though she could do what she was bid. Their next girl was too young to be of much use. There were several boys—Bill, and Tommy, and John, all able to do something to help their father. Just as Rob Hale was shoving off, Tommy Kemp, who, though not so old as Tony, was a great friend of his, came running down to the lake, and begged that he might go with them. They were glad of a companion and took him in. They made very good way along the lake, but the weather began to grow bad before they reached the mouth of the river. Dark clouds gathered, the wind rose, the thunders roared, and the lightning flashed brightly.

"Let us get on shore, for we shall have the rain down thick upon us," cried Tony. "We shall keep dry if we get under a tree." As he spoke a flash of lightning struck a tall tree near the shore. It was split in a moment from top to bottom, and a huge branch torn off.

"It is well that we were not on shore," said Rob. "Where should we have been now if we had got under that tree? God saved us, for it is the very place I thought of going in for shelter. There is a sandy point farther on, we'll go there."

The lads drew their canoe up on the point; then they turned her bottom up and got under her. They

had just done this when the clouds seemed to break open and empty their contents down on them. The wind roared, the waves came rolling almost up to the canoe. They could scarcely hold it down. All this time the thunder roared, and the lightning flashed, and the crashing of falling trees was heard.

“Oh ! oh ! we are all going to be washed away !” cried Tommy in a fright.

“No fear, Tom,” said Tony ; “all we’ve to do is to hold on to the canoe, and to our baskets of grub, and then, if we are washed away, we shall be able to turn the canoe over and get into her.”

This idea made poor Tommy happier till the wind ceased. When they got out from under the canoe, they found that the wind had blown down the trees right through the forest, just as if a broad road had been cut in it, but it had not touched them either on one side or the other. There were still some hours of daylight, so they paddled on. They passed many canoes with Indians in them. They are made of the birch bark, and sewed together with thread made from the root of a shrub ; the seams are then covered over with gum and resin ; the ribs are very thin, and made of white cedar. They look very pretty, and are so light that two men can carry one, which will hold eight or ten persons, a long way over land. It is in this way that people travel in the wild parts where there are many rivers. They paddle along the river till they come to the end of it, and then two of them lift the canoe out of the water, and run along over the ground—it may be a mile or it

may be a dozen—till they come to another river or lake, into which they launch it ; the rest carry the freight on their backs. In that way they go hundreds of miles across North America, indeed almost from ocean to ocean.

The lads were going down the river, when they came near some very strong rapids, with a fall of several feet beyond. When the river in the spring was very full, this fall could be shot. Rob had got close to the rapid before he saw how strong the current was running. To get to land he turned the canoe round, and paddled across the river. There was a small island just below where the canoe was. Rob wished to cross above it. A tree with large branches had fallen, and stuck out into the stream. “Lie down at the bottom of the canoe,” said Rob to Tommy, who looked frightened. “Now, Tony, paddle your best.”

Do all they could, the canoe was carried quickly down by the current, close to the island. At that moment, Tommy, seeing the tree, caught hold of a branch, and swung himself up. As he did so, with a kick he upset the canoe, and both Rob and Tony were thrown out of it. Away it floated, but Rob and his brother had kept hold of their paddles ; and Rob, seizing Tony, swam with him to the island.

Tommy was too much frightened to know what he was about ; and when his weight brought the bough down into the water, instead of dragging himself up he let go, and away he was swept by the current. “Oh save me, Rob ! save me ! save me !” he cried out.

“Swim across the stream, lad, and I’ll come to you,” answered Rob, who was carrying Tony to the island.

Instead of doing that, poor Tommy tried to swim up the stream, and of course was carried lower and lower towards the rapid.

Rob found it a hard task to get Tony safe to land. As soon as he had done so, the two scrambled across the island to see what had become of poor Tommy and the canoe. They had not heard his voice for a minute or more. He was not to be seen. An eddy had taken the canoe and carried it nearly over to the other side. “That eddy will help us,” said Rob: “we must go and look for Tommy.”

Tony did not like to go into the water again; but Rob, telling him to hold on by the paddle, took the other end in his mouth, and swam boldly off towards the canoe. Tony held on, striking with his legs, but he could hardly help crying out for fear of sinking. He thought all the time of Tommy, and what had become of him.

Rob swam on. He was very thankful to reach the canoe. He then made Tony catch hold of it, and pushed it before them till they reached the bank. They lost no time in drawing it on shore, and they looked round for Tommy. He was not to be seen. Before they could launch the canoe again they had to drag it over the grass a hundred yards or more. Once more in the river below the falls they looked about on every side, shouting Tommy’s name. No answer came. It seemed too likely that he was lost.

They hunted for him round every rock, and among all the bushes overhanging the stream, and the fallen trees floating in it, and clinging to the bank with their roots. Not a sign was there of Tommy. The evening was coming on ; it was yet some way to the log hut, where they proposed to stop for the night. Though they feared that he was lost, they did not like to leave the place without finding his body. They paddled first on one side of the stream, then on the other ; then they went up close to the falls. “ We must give it up, I fear,” said Rob.

“ Poor, poor Tommy ! Oh dear ! oh dear ! ” cried Tony. “ Why did he go and do it ! ”

“ It will be sad news at home,” said Rob. “ I am thankful that it wasn’t you, Tony ; but I had rather it had been anybody but Tommy.”

“ Don’t let us give up, then,” said Tony. “ May be he’s farther down the stream. I won’t believe that he’s dead till I see him dead.”

Strive to the last. That is a good principle. It was one Tony held to, young as he was. They slowly paddled down the stream, looking about them as before. There was a small island some way down like the one above the falls. They paddled up to it, and were going round it, when a log of timber was seen caught in the branches of a tree, which had been blown down, and hung into the water. On the inner end sat Tommy, clinging to the bough above his head. He still seemed too much scared to know exactly what he was about. When his friends shouted his name, he only answered, “ Yes ; here I

am." Tony, in his joy at getting him back alive, gave him a hug which nearly again upset the canoe. Tommy seemed scarcely to know what had happened, and thought that he was still on the island above the falls. It seemed that he had got hold of the log as it was floating by, and that he was carried with it over the falls, and thus his life was saved. The three lads now paddled on till, just at dark, they reached Roland's shanty, as it was called.

Roland, an old Scotchman, was an oddity. He called his shanty the White Stag Hotel; and had, chalked up on a board, a figure, under which he had written "The White Stag. Accommodation for man and beast." Except, however, a gallon of whiskey, a jar of beef-tallow, and some Indian-corn bread, he had nothing to set before his guests. The bread and tallow was washed down with burnt-crust coffee, as they did not touch the whiskey. "I ken ye'd be glad o' that if ye was lost in the woods," he said, when he saw the faces of the lads. "What mair can ye want? Dry your clothes, and then there are your beds for ye." He pointed to a heap of spruce fir tops, in a corner of the hut. Though the food was coarse, and their beds rough, the lads slept soundly. They had food of their own, but they wished to husband that for the woods, where they might get none.

Leaving the canoe under charge of Roland, the next morning they began their tramp through the forest. The trees were blazed, and there was a beaten track all the way. They were well known to Roland, and as they were setting off he offered Rob the loan

of his gun, with some shot and powder, he having had one left by a settler, who had not come back for it. With a good supply of food on their shoulders, and axes in their belts, they went on merrily.

CHAPTER IV.

ALONE a person feels somewhat sad walking on hour after hour through the dark forest, but that is not the case when there are several. The young travellers stopped to dine near a stream, and watched the squirrels busily employed in gathering in their winter stores of butter, hickory, and other nuts.

At night they camped out. Cutting a ridge pole, they fastened it between two trees ; and then, on the side next the wind, leaned against it other poles with pieces of bark and branches. In front of this rude hut they made up a large fire, and cut a store of wood to last them all night. Their beds were spruce fir tops, and their coverlids their buffalo robes which they carried strapped on their backs.

On the second day, about noon, as they were walking along in Indian file, one after the other, Rob leading, a fine deer slowly trotted across his path. He had time to unsling his gun, which he carried at his back, and to fire before the animal was out of sight. He hit it, but the deer bounded on. He and his companions followed in chase, Rob reloading as he ran. The blood on the fallen leaves showed that the deer was ahead. On they went,

mile after mile; every moment they thought that they would come up with it. At last more blood was seen on the leaves, and in an open glade there stood the stag. Once more, as the young hunters drew near, he was starting off, when Rob fired, and he fell. Here was a fine supply of venison for the rest of their journey. It was a pity that they could not carry the skin. They cut up the animal, and loaded themselves with as much of the best part of the meat as they could carry. This they secured by thongs cut from the skin. The other joints they hung up by the thongs to a tree, while the carcass remained on the ground.

While they were so employed, some flakes of snow began to fall. At first they did not think much of this. The flakes were thin, and did not cover the marks on the grass. "Come, boys, we must hurry on, or we shall not easily find the blaze again," observed Rob.

They walked as fast as they could with their fresh loads. As there was no wind, they did not complain of the cold. The flakes fell thicker and thicker. "Where is the track?" cried Rob on a sudden. They could see their footmarks behind them, but in front there was not a trace left.

"Go ahead," said Tony. "The stag kept a straight line, and we have only to look behind us and see that ours is straight and we shall soon find the blaze."

Rob did not think this. He was sure before they had gone far that they were bending very much, now to one side, now to the other. No sun shone. There

was no wind to guide them. Rob, after some time, remembered that he had heard that the moss grew thickest on the north side of the trees. On that side the trunks looked light and cheerful and on the other dark and spotted. They had gone some way before he thought of this. Tony and Tommy cried out that they were very hungry, for they had had no dinner before they saw the deer. Rob wanted to find the blaze first. They walked on and on, looking carefully at the trees. No blaze was to be seen. At last the boys said they could go no farther without eating, and Rob himself was very hungry. So they picked up dry sticks; and soon had a fire blazing, and some bits of venison toasting before it. The snow fell thicker than ever. They scraped some up and put it into their kettle and made some tea. Once more they went on, feeling much stronger.

“We must soon find the blaze,” Rob said more than once; but he was wrong. Night drew on. No blaze was to be found. “We must make a camp before it is too dark,” he said at last.

No time was lost. He had his axe soon at work cutting poles and boughs and fire-wood, the boys helping him. A fallen trunk formed the back. Between two in front they fastened a long pole and rested the other poles and boughs between it and the trunk. They did not wish for better beds than the spruce fir tops gave them. A fire soon blazed up in front of the tent. Tony and Tommy were as merry as crickets. They had plenty to eat and the fir tops made them a soft bed, while the fire kept them warm. It was

settled that one of them at a time should keep awake to put wood on the fire. Tommy had the first watch. Then he called Rob when he thought he had watched long enough. Of course Rob got the most watching. At last he called Tony and charged him to keep awake.

“Never fear about me; I’ll be broad awake till it’s time to call Tommy again,” said Tony.

Rob had built up the fire, so that Tony had not much to do. He sat up for some time, warming his hands and watching the blazing logs. Then he thought that he would sit down rather more inside the tent for a little time. He did nod his head now and then, but that was nothing, he thought. He was sure that he had his eyes wide open. After some time he heard a howl—then another, and another. A number of animals howled together—wild beasts—wolves. He thought, “I hope that they are a long way off.” They were not loud enough as yet to awake his sleeping companions, but they were coming slowly nearer and nearer. Tony rubbed his eyes. Was he awake? He looked up. The fire was almost out. There was no doubt about the howl of the wolves. They were much nearer than he had fancied. The flame on a sudden burst out of the embers, and out of the darkness several pairs of fierce eyes glared at him.

“Rob! Rob! Tommy! wolves!” he shouted out, at the same time seizing a stick from the fire, and waving it about.

Rob and Tommy were on their feet in a moment,

and each taking up a burning stick they made a rush towards the wolves. They were not an instant too soon, for the fierce beasts having scented the venison, were just going to rush at them. The fire-sticks kept them off, but they did not go far. There they stood in a circle howling away at the three young travellers. While Tony and Tommy threw more wood on the fire, Rob stepped back and loaded his gun, which he had forgot to reload after the second shot at the deer. The wolves seeing that the fire-sticks did them **no** harm, and being very hungry, were coming on, when the boys once more shouting at the top of their voices, and stirring up the fire, Rob fired at the biggest of the pack, who seemed to be the leader. Over the creature rolled, and his companions taking flight with fearful yells drew back into the forest. Tony said he was sure they stopped and looked round, every now and then yelling together, and asking each other to turn back and renew the attack.

The lads at last lay down, but all night long the wolves kept up their howlings close to them with snarls and other noises.

“I dare say now that those fellows have got some carcase or other, and are making merry over it,” said Rob.

The watchmen did not fall asleep again during the night. When daylight came back the snow had ceased falling, but it lay an inch thick on the ground.

“We must find the blaze before breakfast,” said Rob, as they strapped their things on to their backs.

In all directions they saw the marks of the wolves' feet on the snow. They followed them up some little way to see what they had been feeding on during the night.

“Why if this isn't the very place where we killed the deer and there is our venison still hanging up in the tree, which the brutes couldn't get at, and that made them howl so,” cried out Tony, who was a little before the rest. They found then that after all their wanderings in the afternoon they had come back to the very spot they had left at mid-day. They hoped that now, if they made a fresh start, that they might reach the blaze. They more carefully noted the moss on the trees. The sun too shone out brightly. They were stepping out merrily, and they thought that they must be near the blaze, when before them was seen a large cedar swamp. The tree in Canada called the cedar is low, twisted, and knotted, with straggling roots growing in moist ground. It makes a thicket which the wind cannot pass through. Indians often cut a way into a cedar swamp in winter to build their wigwams in it. The travellers knew that they could not pass through the swamp, which was all moist, so they had to find their way round it. They fancied that they could not fail to reach the blaze. At last they got very hungry and had to stop and light a fire and breakfast. They knew that they were fortunate in having plenty of food, for they had heard of people wandering about in the woods for days together without anything to eat. Noon came round again. No blaze yet seen.

“When shall we find our way out of this, Rob?” asked Tony.

“May be in a day or two, may be in a week,” answered Rob.

Tony and Tommy looked very black at this. They were getting tired walking about all day in the snow, with heavy loads on their backs. Tommy began to cry. Just then a shot was heard. They ran on in the direction from which the sound came, and Rob fired his gun in return. In a few minutes they met a tall, thin, oldish man, with a gun in his hand and a bag at his back.

“Why, youngsters, where have you come from?” he asked.

Rob told him.

“Not much out, youngsters; why you are scarcely more than two hundred yards from the blaze, and haven’t been for some time past,” the old man replied. “Come, I’ll show you.”

The old hunter stalked away at a great rate, and they followed as fast as they could.

“That’s your way,” he said; pointing to the blazes on the trees. “Push on as fast as you can, or the snow may be down on you, and you’ll not be able to get on without snow shoes. It wouldn’t be pleasant to you to be snowed up here in the woods.”

“No, indeed, master,” said Rob; “especially if we were to have such visitors as came to us last night.”

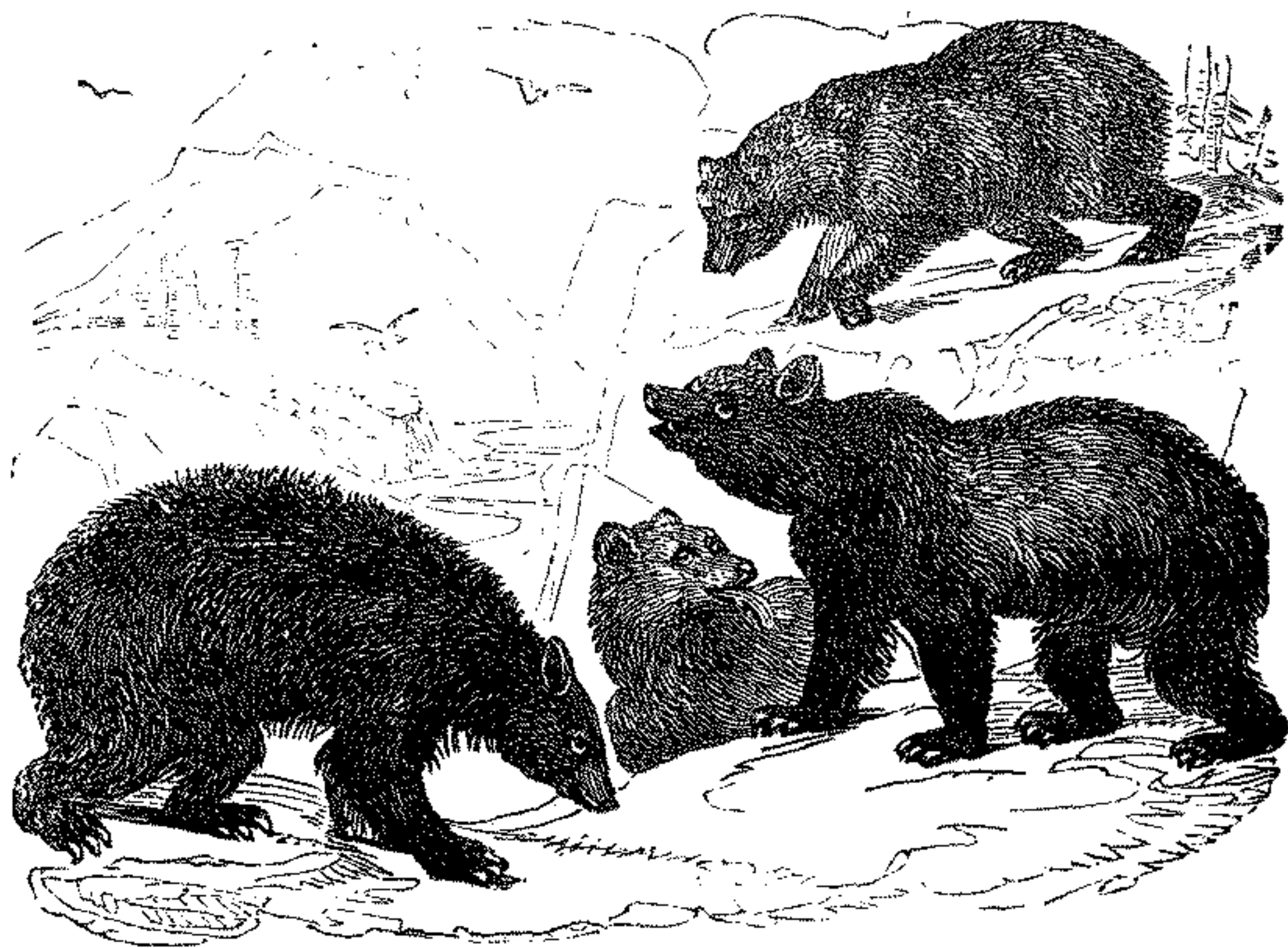
The old hunter laughed when Rob told him of the wolves.

“They won’t hurt any body who shows a bold front, for they are great cowards,” said the old man. “But woe betide the boy who is caught out alone at night, if any of the savage beasts fall in with him. Still, though I’ve hunted through these parts more than thirty years, I’ve heard of very few people who ever got any harm from them.”

Rob thanked the old man, who said that his name was Danby Marks.

They all walked on together for some time, chatting pleasantly. The snow began to fall very thickly again. Rob thought that old Marks was going to leave them.

“I see that you are young travellers, and I may help you a bit may be,” said the old man; “your way shall be mine.”



THE BLACK BEARS OF CANADA.

He told them much about the birds and beasts and fish of those parts. “The lakes and rivers are full of fish; the salmon are very fine. Then there

are sturgeon, and a fish called maskinonge, not known in England; and pike, and pickrel, and white-fish, and trout, and herrings, very like those in salt water; and bass, and sun-fish, and perch, and many others. Anybody may catch them who can. Many are killed with a spear, and others caught with nets of all sorts. Indians catch the white-fish with a scoop-net, like a landing-net, with a long handle. They stand up in their canoes, amid the rapids, and as they see the fish in some more quiet hollow, they, quick as lightning, slip in their nets and scoop him up. They carry torches in their canoes at night, and when the fish swim near, drawn by the light, they dart down their barbed spears and seldom fail to spike.

“This is a rich country, indeed,” continued old Marks. “Just think of the numbers of deer, the moose, with a heavy head, bigger than the largest horse; and the cariboo, rather smaller, but more fleet; and then there’s the elk, and other smaller deer. Many and many’s the night I’ve camped out on the snow, with my feet to a blazing fire, wrapped up in a buffalo robe, going after them critters. Then we’ve black bears, but they don’t often attack men, though they are mortal fond of honey, and sheep, or pigs, or poultry, when they can catch them. The wolverene, is the most savage animal we’ve got, and as cunning as a fox. They can climb trees, and spring down on their prey. I’ve known a man try to catch one, and very nearly got caught himself. The racoon is a curious critter, with the body of a

fox, the head of a dog, and a round, bushy tail. The hind legs are longer than the fore, and both are armed with sharp claws. They live in trees, and leap nimbly from branch to branch. We shoot them sitting on branches, or popping their heads out of some old hollow stump. Then there's the lynx, and the otter, beaver, musk-rat, ground-hog, wood-chuck, flying squirrel, skunk, marten, mink, fisher, hedgehog, and many others. Most of them are eatable, and the skins of all of them sell for a good deal of money. We have no lack of birds either: wild turkeys, and geese, and ducks, and pigeons, which fly in flocks so thick as to darken the air. A man with a good gun, and who knows how to set traps, need never starve in this country. Not but what I say a settler's life is the best for most people. I took to the woods when I was young, and now I am old I have no wife or children to care for me, and that's not the fate I would wish for any of you young people."

The old man sighed deeply as he finished speaking.

Still Rob was so interested with the accounts of the old trapper's adventures, that he begged he would let him go with him some time into the woods to hunt. Old Marks readily promised to take Rob with him. They travelled on cheerily, talking on these subjects, though the snow fell so thickly that at last it became heavy work to walk through it. They had to camp out three nights, so little way did they make. Still they did not mind that, as they had plenty to eat, and old Marks told them no end of amusing stories.

At last they reached the town where Susan was at service. She was expecting them, and all ready to start. When, however, her mistress, Mrs. Mason, heard that she intended walking, she would not let her go. She said that it was not fit for a young girl who was delicate, and that she must wait till she could get a lift in a sleigh going that way. Rob said that he would not wait, as he ought to be back again to help his father. Still the good lady would not give in.

CHAPTER V.

Two days passed, and the snow came down again thicker than ever. Then it cleared up. The sky was bright, the wind keen, and there seemed every chance of the frost lasting for some days. It was likely, however, that there would be one or two thaws before the regular frost of winter set in.

At last Rob thought that he would hire a sleigh to carry his sister. Just then, who should he meet in the street but his neighbour, Mr. Landon. Rob told him of his difficulty.

“Just the very thing,” said Mr. Landon. “I have bought two sleighs, one which I want to send home at once, as it is for the use of my wife and daughters. You shall take Susan in it, if your brother will wait two or three days longer, and drive the luggage-sleigh with my winter stores. By starting early you will be able to get through half the distance to Roland’s shanty by night-fall. Take

fodder for the horse, and if you cover in the sleigh at night, and keep up a blazing fire, Susan won't be the worse for it.

Rob agreed to the proposal. Tony and Tommy were in great glee at the thoughts of driving a sleigh by themselves. Rob had told Mr. Landon that Tony was fully up to the work. As there was no time to be lost, Rob set off the next morning by daybreak, with Susan well wrapped up in buffalo robes.

Mr. Landon had to do some business in a distant town, and would not be back for two weeks or so. It seemed certain that the fine weather would last when Rob set out. At last Tony's turn came. His sleigh was only a large box, on runners. Before day broke, he and Tommy were on foot, ready to start. Mr. Landon cautioned them not to delay on the road.

"No fear, sir," said Tony.

"May be we'll catch up Rob, if he isn't very smart," observed Tommy.

Away they drove. There was nothing unusual in giving a sleigh in charge of two such boys as Tony and Tommy. Boys in the colonies are constantly employed in work which men only would undertake in the old country. Tony had often driven sleighs long distances for his former master, so he had no fear about the matter. The horse was a rough animal, well up to bush travelling. If he could not go round a log, he thought nothing of making a leap over it. Away they trotted, the sleigh-bells sounding merrily in the frosty air. Rob's sleigh and several others had passed, so that the snow was beaten

pretty hard, while the track was well marked. Tony and Tommy amused themselves by whistling and singing and telling stories, laughing heartily at what each other said. The country looked very different to what it had done ten days before. Everything was white, the boughs hung down with the weight of snow, and where in some places it had melted and frozen again, the trees looked as if they were covered with diamonds and rubies and other precious stones. The horse went well, and they got on famously all day. Before it was dark they reached the spot where Rob and Susan had camped.

The boys soon had a fire blazing in front of the hut Rob had built for Susan. They hobbled the horse, and gave him some hay and oats, and then they began to cook their own provisions. It would have been hard to find a couple of more merry and happy fellows ; not that they had forgot the wolves, but they did not fear being attacked as long as they kept up a good fire. This time, however, the one on the watch took care not to fall asleep, and to keep the fire burning brightly. Now and then howls were heard from far off in the depths of the forest, which reminded them of the visitors they might expect if they let the fire out.

Daylight came again ; they and the horse breakfasted ; and they were once more gliding over the smooth snow, the sleigh-bells sounding merrily in the fresh morning air. As the sun rose, the air became warmer and the snow softer, which prevented them from getting on so well as they hoped. As the

sun went round, and the trees for a time were cast into shade, long icicles formed on the boughs, which, as a stray beam found its way through the wood, shone like masses of precious stones.

The snow had now lasted for some days, and at that early time of the season a thaw might any hour begin. This made the two lads eager to push on ; but “too much haste is bad speed,” and they almost knocked up their horse before half the day’s journey was over. The evening was drawing on, and they were still a long way from Roland’s shanty. Tony was driving, and making their tired horse go on as fast as he could, when Tommy, looking over his shoulder, saw a huge wolf following close behind them. “Drive on fast,” cried Tommy, pointing at the wolf, “I don’t like the looks of that chap.”

“He’s not a beauty, but he won’t do us any harm as long as he’s alone,” said Tony, who was a brave little fellow.

“But he isn’t alone,” cried Tommy, “I see three or four other brutes skulking there among the trees—Push on ! push on ! ”

It was high time, indeed, to push on, for the big wolf was drawing nearer and nearer, and his followers seemed only to be waiting his signal to begin the attack. As the horse, knowing his own danger, galloped on faster, the wolves set up a hideous howl, fearful that their prey would escape them. Tommy seized the whip from Tony and began to lash away at them.

“If I had Rob’s gun I’d pay off those brutes,”

cried Tony, "slash away Tommy! keep them off! it won't be pleasant if they catch hold of us."

On went the horse; he did not think of being tired now. It was hard work to guide him between the stumps and fallen trees. Tommy lashed and lashed away, and shouted at the top of his voice. An overturn would have caused their death, as the wolves would have set on them before they had time to get upon their feet. They were coming to a bad bit of the road where they would have to drive down some steep and rugged places to avoid fallen logs. The wolves seemed to think that this would be their time, for all the pack made a dash at the sleigh. Tommy lashed with his whip with all his might. One big beast was on the point of springing into the sleigh, and the boys, with reason, gave up all for lost. Still, like brave fellows, they strove to the last. "Hit him with the butt end," cried Tony.

Tommy struck the brute with all his might between the eyes. The wolf fell back, but others were coming on. A moment afterwards two more sprang up at the sleigh. One of them Tommy treated as he had done the first, but the other was just seizing him by the leg, and a third was flying at Tony, who, having to guide the horse, could not defend himself, when a bullet whistled by and knocked over one of the animals. The others, frightened by the report, stopped short, and Tommy had time to hit the wolf just going to lay hold of Tony.

"Well done, youngster, well done," cried a man who just then stepped out of the bush. "If I hadn't

THE FORTUNES OF MICHAEL HALE.



TOMMY AND TONY ATTACKED BY THE WOLVES.

come just in the nick of time it would have been the worse for you, though."

The boys saw that the man was their friend Danby Marks. Tony had hard work to stop the frightened horse, and could not have done it if the old man had not caught the reins and soothed the animal. A second shot from his rifle, by which another wolf was killed, sent the whole cowardly pack howling back into the forest. "You must let me go as your guard for the rest of the way," said the old hunter, as he stepped into the sleigh and bade Tony drive on, "Don't suppose, though, I came here by chance," he added; "nothing ever does happen by chance, and I am here to-day because I met Rob, and as his mind misgave him, he begged that I would come and look after you."

Tony and his friend thanked the old man heartily for the help he had given them. "Yes, indeed, Mr. Marks : we should have been made into mince-meat by this time if it hadn't been for you," said Tony.

It was, indeed, a good thing for the lads that the old trapper found them when he did, even if there had been no wolves ; for the night came on very dark, and without him they could not have found their way to Roland's shanty. In the night the wind changed, the rain came down in torrents, and the remainder of the road along the banks of the river and the shore of the lake was impassable. They had, therefore, to follow Mr. Landon's orders, to leave the sleigh under Roland's care, and to go home in the canoe.

CHAPTER VI.

OLD Marks offered, the next morning, to go with them, telling them that the current in the river was so strong that they would not stem it by themselves. They saw that he spoke the truth, and were very glad to have his help. The rain ceasing, they started soon after breakfast with as much of Mr. Landon's goods as the canoe would carry.

Tony thought Rob a very good canoe-man, but he found the old trapper a far better; and it was curious to see the way in which he managed the canoe, even among rapids, into which few persons would have ventured. His strength, too, was very great—for he dragged the canoe, heavily laden as it was, all the way along the portage over the snow; for the frost came on again that evening, and in exposed places hardened the ground. They found it much colder camping out by the lake than they had done in the woods.

As soon as it was dark, the old trapper lighted a torch, and with a spear went out in the canoe. The fish came up to the light as moths do to a candle, and were seen by the old sportsman's sharp eye; and in the course of a few minutes he had killed more fish than he and his two young companions could eat for their supper and breakfast. With the canoe to keep off the wind, and a blazing fire, they did not complain of the cold. The paddle across the lake, however, exposed to the biting wind, was the coldest part of the journey.

They had made some way along the lake, when Tommy, who had nothing to do but to look about him, said that he saw some one walking about on an island, and making signals.

“Some Indian just warming himself this cold day,” said Tony laughing.

“May be, it’s no business of ours,” said Tommy.

“Boys, if a fellow creature is in distress, it’s our business to go and see if we can help him,” observed old Marks gravely, and turned the head of the canoe towards the island. “If he’s not in distress it is only a little of our time lost, and better lose a great deal than leave a human being to perish, whatever the colour of his skin.”

Tony and Tommy felt rebuked for their carelessness. On getting near the island, who should they see but Pat Honan, one of the men who had been employed chopping for Michael Hale. He now looked very blue. He could not speak, and could scarcely move his hands.

“He’d have been frozen to death in a few more minutes,” said Marks. “Light a fire, lads, quick, and we’ll warm him up.”

He threw one of the buffalo robes over the man, and poured a few drops of whiskey down his throat, while the boys made up a blazing fire. Marks turned poor Pat round and round before it, rubbing and beating him. As soon as Pat could speak, he cried out, “Arrah, it was the whiskey, the whiskey did it all; ahone, ahone! if it wasn’t for that, Pater Disney might have been alive and well.”

“What about Peter Disney?” asked Marks.

“Oh, ahone, ahone! he lies out there stark and cold,” answered Pat, pointing to the other end of the island.

As soon as Pat got well enough to be left for a little while, with Tommy to look after him and keep up the fire, Marks and Tony paddled round to where he pointed. There they found a boat knocking against some rocks, and, on landing, not far off was the body of Peter Disney, frozen stiff, though covered up with a blanket. He was sitting upright with his mouth open. A dreadful picture. Nothing could be done for him, so they again covered him up, and towed the boat out from among the rocks.

“I should like to write over his head, ‘Drink did it,’” said the old man: “if I was more of a scholar I would.”

As the canoe would not hold another passenger, they all got into the big boat and towed her. Marks, Pat, and Tommy took the oars while Tony steered.

“Well, Pat, how did it happen?” asked Marks.

“Why, do you see, Pater and I was going to do some work for a new settler at the farther end of the lake, and so we hired a boat to make a short cut—a long cut it’ll be for Pater, seeing he’ll never get there; och, ahone, ahone! Says Pater, ‘We’ll not do without provisions, Pat, and so I’ll be after getting some, and jist a drop of whiskey to wash them down.’ I axes him if he’d got them all right. ‘All right,’ says he, as we shoved off. All right it wasn’t though, for when I came to ax for some bread and cheese

and a slice of pork, he hadn't got any. Indeed, faith, he'd forgotten all else but a big bottle of the cratur. 'It's a bad bargain,' says I; but I thought we'd make the best of it. We rowed, and we took a pull at the bottle, and we rowed again, and then another pull; but Pater took two pulls for my one—worse luck for him,—and so we went on till somehow or other we both fell asleep. When we woke up, there we were in the middle of a rice-bed. How to get out was a hard job, when Pater, in trying to shove with the oar, fell overboard. I caught him by one leg just as he was going to be drowned entirely, but he was little better than a mass of ice in a few minutes, in spite of the whiskey inside of him. I at last got him on shore, and covered him up with a blanket, but before long he was as stiff as an icicle, and though I shouted as loud as I could, and bate him with a big stick, I couldn't make him hear or feel. Ahone, ahone! och the whiskey! I'd rather that never a drop should pass my lips again, than to die as Pater Disney."

Several families of Irish had lately arrived at the settlement, to some of whom Peter Disney was related.

As soon as Pat Honan drew near the shore, where many of them were standing watching the boat, he shouted out that Peter was dead. Forthwith they set up a fearful howl, in which others as they came up joined them, till the whole party were howling away in concert, led by Pat, who cried out,

"Ah, it was drink—the cratur,—'twas drink, drink that did it."

Rob and Susan had arrived safely with the sleigh. As soon as the ground hardened, Rob set off in the canoe, and brought the luggage-sleigh home by the snow road formed through the woods, along the borders of the lake.

CHAPTER VII.

THOUGH most out-of-door work comes to a standstill in winter, chopping can still be carried on, fallen trees cut up and fresh trees cut down. One of the customs of the country is to form a bee when any particular piece of work has to be done in a hurry. Such as a log hut or a barn raised, or some ground cleared.

The bees are the neighbours who come from far and near ; they receive no wages, but are fed well, and whiskey is served out too well while they are at work. The more industrious among the settlers employed the time in the house in making household furniture, mending their tools, and in many other ways—not forgetting reading the Bible to their families.

The winter was already some way advanced when most of the inhabitants of Thornhill were invited to chop trees and to put up a log hut, by a gentleman, a Mr. Sudbury, who had bought land about three miles off and wished to get in some crops as soon as the snow was off the ground.

Michael Hale, and Rob, and John Kemp, and Mr. Landon, and many others went. They expected to

clear half an acre of ground, and to get the walls and roof of the log hut up in one day. Most of the settlers in Thornhill were well, in spite of the cold, except Mrs. Kemp. She had for some time been ailing, and expected soon to give birth to another child. Mrs. Hale had gone in to have a chat with her, and to help her in some household matters, when Tommy came running in breathless.

“What’s the matter, Tommy ; eh boy ?” asked Mrs. Hale.

“A big tree has come down at Mr. Sudbury’s clearing, and killed, or pretty nigh killed, some one. Nobody knows who it is, but I hope it’s not father, nor Mr. Hale either.”

These words frightened both the wives, who wanted to set off at once.

“No, no, I’ll go,” said Mrs. Hale. “You stay quiet at home, Mrs. Kemp. It’s the only fit place for you.”

Just then, one of the Miss Landon’s came in to see Mrs. Kemp. She said, if Tony, who had come up with his mother, would go with her, she would set off at once, with such things as were likely to be of use to the sufferer, whoever he might be.

“You, Mrs. Hale, stay and take care of Mrs. Kemp,” she said.

This Mrs. Hale promised to do, for Mrs. Kemp was looking very ill.

Mary Landon was a young girl of much sense. She hurried home, and collected all the articles she might require.

Tony said that he knew a short cut, but as it was not beaten down it could not be passed except on snow-shoes. His own he had brought with him. Mary had lately learned to walk in them, and had a pair ready. They were wooden frames in shape something like an egg flattened out, only sharp at both ends. The centre part was net-work of leather thongs, like a very coarse sieve. They are fastened to the feet by thongs of leather. From covering so much space, they do not sink into the snow. On their feet, people in winter wear in the country soft leather socks, called mocassins, with one or two pairs of thick worsted socks inside. Mary's were made by an Indian woman, a squaw, as the natives call their wives and daughters. They were worked prettily with coloured porcupine-quills and beads.

Quickly putting on her snow shoes, Mary set off with Tony. Both had long sticks in their hands. They had got about half way, when Tony looked up, and said, "I hope, Miss Landon, that you are not afraid of bears:—

"Why?" she asked.

"Because I see the fresh marks of one on the snow," he answered. "We may meet the gentleman; if we do, we must attack him with our sticks, and shout, and he will go off; but if we attempt to run, he'll gain courage and follow."

Mary said that she would follow Tony's advice; but as she walked on, she looked anxiously on one side and on the other, expecting to see the bear appear. As to running away in snow shoes, that she could

not, and she was afraid that, in attacking the bear, she might topple over, and he might set on her.

“No fear, Miss Mary,” said Tony, as he saw her looking about; “if he does come, I’ll give him a taste of the tip of my stick, and he’ll soon turn his tail to us; he is not far off, I see by his marks; he’ll show himself presently. Now don’t run, Miss Mary, but shout out like a man, as if you wasn’t afraid.”

Scarcely had Tony given this advice, than a brown, shaggy-coated bear was seen moving along the snow between the trees. He soon caught sight of the travellers, and sat up, watching them as they passed.

“I told you he wouldn’t hurt us,” said Tony; “we used to see plenty of them where we were last.” They had not, however, gone far, when Tony, looking over his shoulder, cried out, “Here he comes though; but don’t fear, there’s a rise a little farther on, and from the top of it we can see Mr. Sudbury’s clearing.” Still the bear followed, and got closer and closer. Tony kept facing him every now and then. At last he cried out, “Now’s our turn, Miss Mary, turn round and shout as you never shouted before.” Mary did as she was advised, and Tony at the same time setting up a loud shriek and hallo, and shaking his stick, the bear was so astonished that he turned round and waddled off. Once or twice he looked back, but Tony’s shout made him hasten away faster than before. Thus it will be seen, that though there are bears in Canada, they are not much to be dreaded.

In a short time Mary and her companion arrived

at the clearing. She inquired anxiously who was the sufferer, for she knew that it might be her own father as likely as any one else.

“It is John Kemp, he is there in the hut,” was the answer.

“Bless you, Miss Mary,” said Michael Hale, when he saw her come to assist his friend; “but I’m afraid that help comes too late. The best surgeon in the land couldn’t cure him.”

Poor John Kemp lay in a corner of the unfinished hut on a bed of spruce fir tops, a fire lighted near to give him some warmth. He was moaning and complaining of the cold. He had been cut by his axe as the tree fell, which at the same time crushed one of his legs and hurt his side. Mary bound up the wound more carefully than it had been done, and fomented his side; but she saw that she could do no more, and advised his being carried home at once. No surgeon was to be found nearer than forty miles. One had been sent for, but it was very doubtful if he could come. A litter of boughs was at once formed, and poor John, wrapped up in buffalo robes, was at once placed on it, and Michael and Rob Hale, and other members of the bee, undertook to carry him home. He thanked his friends, and Mary in particular, but told them that he was sure he should never get there. He did, however; but those who carried him saw, as they drew near his cottage, that something was wrong. Michael sent Tony on to ask. Tony came back shaking his head: some one had told Mrs. Kemp, in a hurry, that her husband

was killed. The shock was too great for one in her weak state. Just before her husband was brought home, she had died, giving birth to a tenth child. "God's will be done," whispered John Kemp, when he heard of his wife's death, "He will take care of our poor orphan children."

Before the night was over John himself had rejoined his wife in another world. His prayer was heard, and his faith in God's love rewarded. A meeting of all the settlers was called. Mr. Landon proposed raising a subscription for the orphans. "That is not wanted," said Michael Hale, "I will take charge of two of them, and more, if the rest do not find homes—Fanny and Tommy shall become my children."

"And I will take another girl then," said Mr. Landon; "and the poor infant, my daughter will nurse it."

"I will take a boy," said Mr. Sudbury.

Thus the children were quickly disposed of among some of the kindest and best of the people in the settlement. The orphans became really and truly their children, and were treated in no respects differently. There was nothing uncommon in this. The same thing is done in all parts of the province, and those who thus protect the orphans seldom fail to receive a blessing on their homes. Fanny and Tommy soon learned to look on Mr. and Mrs. Hale as their parents, and to render them the same obedience and affection that they would have done had they really been so.

CHAPTER VIII.

No one finds settling in a new country all smooth work ; and if a man cannot look ahead and think of what his labour is sure to produce, he will often be very much down-hearted. Some people give up when, if they had held on, they would have succeeded at last. Michael Hale was not one of the give-in sort. The winter in Canada lasts a long time, but most people who have plenty to do like it very much. Michael Hale's public room was a good large one, and as soon as the day's work was over, and supper eaten, he set everybody to doing something or other. The girls had always plenty to do to spin and knit and sew. The boys, too, learned to knit, so that they could knit their own stockings. There was a handloom weaver among the settlers, and from him David learned to weave what his sisters spun. From this time, except a little calico, there was very little in the way of clothing the family had to buy. Tony learned cobbling, and, in time, to make shoes. Rob was a first-rate carpenter. The younger boys helped their brothers. Those were pleasant evenings, as they sat round the blazing fire which made amends for the poor light of the tallow lamps.

One evening Rob and David had to go out to look after one of the cows which was sick. They did not much like leaving the cozy fireside for the freezing night air. "It must be done though," said Rob ; "come along, David." No sooner did they open the door than they heard a strange squeaking from the

pig-sty, which they had wisely built at some little distance from the house. It was a bitter night. They stopped an instant to listen, and in that instant their hair and eyebrows and eyelashes were frosted over. The squeaking went on. "Some creature must be among the pigs," cried Rob. "Run back for the gun, David, I'll go and see."

While David went in to get the gun, Rob, with a thick stick and a lantern in his hand, hurried down to the pig-sty. One fine porker lay bleeding on the ground, and another was not to be seen. A faint squeak from the forest on one side showed where he was gone. Rob calling on David to follow, ran on in the hopes of catching the thief. He hadn't got far when the light of the lantern fell on the back of a shaggy-haired beast, which he at once knew to be that of a bear. In its fore-paws it carried the missing porker, which still sent forth a piteous cry for help. Rob soon overtook the bear and gave him a no gentle tap on the back of his head. Bruin, not liking this, dropped the pig and turned round to face Rob, while piggie, having still the use of his legs, ran off towards his sty. The bear seemed resolved to vent his rage on Rob, who stood ready to receive him with his thick stick, flourishing it before his face. With a loud growl the angry bear sprang on Rob. "Fire! fire!" cried Rob, "he is biting my shoulder."

David was afraid of hitting his brother, he did not therefore fire till he got close up to them, and then, putting the gun to the bear's head, he pulled

the trigger. Over rolled the creature, and Rob was set free. He was much hurt, but his thick coat had saved him from a worse wound. The snow was hard, so that they were able to drag the carcase over it to the house. One of the pigs was so much hurt that Rob was obliged to kill it, while the other, which had been carried off, escaped without much damage. After doctoring the cow they appeared at home with their prize. It made more than amends for the loss of the pig; for in Canada, in winter, it matters not how much meat is in store, as once frozen it will keep till the warm weather returns. Often people have a dozen turkeys and twice as many fowls, and small animals, and fish hanging up in their larders, at once. In the markets, fish, flesh, and fowl are also sold in a frozen state. The bear was quickly skinned and cut up, but he was frozen almost hard before the work was finished.

The next day Rob's shoulder hurt him so much that he was obliged to stay at home. Susan and his mother doctored it as best they could, but he did not get better. At last they went up to Mr. Landon's house, to ask what they ought to do. Though it was one of the coldest days, Mrs. and Miss Landon hurried down to the hut. They soon saw that, without great care, the matter might become serious. Having left a lotion and some medicine, with directions how to treat Rob, they were on their way, home when they saw a thick smoke curling up into the sky above where their house stood. Mary hurried on till she could see the house itself. Fire was coming out of the roof.

“ Oh, mother, do you go back to the Hales and ask for help, and I will run on and see what can be done at once,” she exclaimed.

As soon as Mrs. Landon reached the Hales, Tommy ran to call Michael and his two boys, and Pat Honan, who was working for them. Mr. Landon and his only son, George, was away. Mary found Biddy M’Cosh, the servant-girl, wringing her hands and running about not knowing what to do, while her youngest sister was asleep, and the next was crying, seeing that something was the matter but not knowing what it was.

Mary’s first thought was to place her little sisters in safety, the next was how to put out the fire and save the furniture. The children she carried, with some bedding, to an outhouse, and wrapped them up warmly. While doing this, she sent Biddy in search of a ladder. By it she bravely mounted to the roof. Biddy had made up too large a fire in the stove and heated the flue. This had set fire to the wooden roof. No water was to be had; every drop around was frozen.

“ Biddy, a shovel ! ” cried Mary. With it she shovelled the snow over the roof, but it did little even in checking the flames. While she was so employed, her mother and Mrs. Hale and Susan arrived. Rob followed—nothing would stop him. Susan climbed, up to the roof, with her, and the two girls worked bravely together. Rob said that he must go up and help them, but his mother held him back.

“ It will be his death if he goes up there,” said

Mrs. Landon. "If you must work, Rob, help us to get out the furniture."

While they were thus employed, Michael Hale and his two sons and Honan and other neighbours arrived. The two girls came down from their post of danger and the men took their places, but they could not with the snow alone stop the flames. There seemed every chance of Mr. Landon's house being burnt down.

"I've seen salt melt snow. If there is in the house a cask of meat in brine that may help us," exclaimed Rob.

There was one. It was brought out, the head knocked in, and the brine poured out in small quantities on the snow. Wherever the brine dropped the snow melted, and the fire was put out. It was some time, however, before all danger was passed. A large part of the roof was damaged and the house made unfit to be inhabited.

"Oh, Mrs. Landon, ma'am, I hope that you will honor us by coming down and taking up your abode with us till the roof is on again," said Mrs. Hale in a kind voice. "Susan will take care of Miss Mary and the little ones, and Mr. Landon and your son George will be sure to find lodgings with other friends till the house is set to rights again."

Mr. Landon had suffered so many ups and downs in life that when he arrived he was not very much put out at the injury done to his house. He was only thankful that his wife and children had escaped injury.

A bee was formed, and in a couple of days the roof was replaced, and in less than a week the house again habitable.

CHAPTER IX.

THE winter was drawing to an end. It had not appeared very long, after all—everybody had been so busy. Michael and his sons were now at work cutting out troughs for sugar making. In Canada the maple yields a sap which, when boiled, turns into sugar. A number of maple-trees together is called a sugar-bush. The troughs are made of pine, black ash, or butter-nut, and each holds three to four gallons of sap.

The snow was still on the ground, when early in March, Michael and his sons, and Susan and Fanny and Tommy set off with their sugar kettles, pails, ladles, big store troughs, small troughs, and moulds, to the sugar-bush two miles from the house. They first built huts for the kettles and for themselves; fixed the store trough and cut a supply of fuel for the fires. They next tapped the maple-trees on the south side, with an auger of an inch and a half. Into this hole a hollow spile was driven. Under each spile a trough was placed. As soon as the sun grew warm the sap began to flow and drop into the troughs. The girls and boys had soon work enough to empty the troughs into a large cask on the sleigh. This, when full, was carried to the boiling-

sheds and emptied into the store trough. From this the kettles are filled and kept boiling night and day, till the sap becomes a thin molasses. It is then poured into pails or casks, and made clear with eggs or milk stirred well into it. The molasses are now poured again into the boilers over a slow fire, when the dirt rises to the top, and is skimmed off. To know when it has boiled enough, a small quantity is dropped on the snow. If it hardens when cool it has been boiled enough. It is then poured into the moulds, when it quickly hardens and is ready for use. Very good vinegar can be made by boiling three pails of sap into one, and then adding some yeast, still better is made from the sap of the birch; beer is made both from maple and birch sap, and a flavour given by adding essence of spruce or ginger. Boiling the sap and molasses requires constant attention, as there is a danger of their boiling over.

While Michael and Rob attended to the boiling, David and Tommy drove the sleigh, and the rest took care of the troughs. They had a large number of troughs, and some were a long way from the boiling-sheds.

Michael and his son had filled the kettles, which they did not expect would boil for some little time, when Tommy came running up to say that the sleigh had stuck fast between two stumps, and that he and David could not clear it, while one of the oxen had fallen down and hurt itself against a log. On hearing this, Michael and Rob, thinking that there

would be plenty of time to help David, and to get back before the sugar boiled, ran to assist him. They found the sleigh firmly fixed, and it took them longer to clear it than they had expected it would. They had just got it clear, when a loud bellow reached their ears from the direction of the boiling-sheds. Leaving David and Tommy to manage the oxen, Michael and Rob ran back to their charge. They arrived in time to see one of their cows, with her muzzle well covered with molasses, galloping off through the bush, followed by her companions, while the kettle lay upset, the contents streaming out on the fire, and burning away, and threatening to set all the sheds in a blaze. The cows had found their way into the bush, and being fond of sugar, one of them had put her muzzle into the boiling liquid, little expecting to have so warm a greeting.

“I hope it will teach her not to steal sugar for the future,” observed Michael, as he and his son righted the kettle. They had to pull down some of the shed before they could put the fire out; but such trifling events were too common in the bush to disturb their tempers, and they were thankful that matters were no worse.

Just before this, a neighbour's cow had got into his sugar bush and drank so much cold molasses that she burst and died. Michael determined another year to enclose his sugar bush to prevent any such accidents.

In two weeks enough sugar was made to last the family all the year, to make all sorts of preserves,

besides a good supply of beer and vinegar. With the vinegar they could pickle onions, and all sorts of vegetables, for winter use. Vegetables are also preserved during the winter in cellars, dug generally under the fire place, in a log hut. A trap-door leads to the cellar. Here potatoes, carrots, turnips, and other roots are stored, and kept free from frost.

The snow at length melted, and spring came on as it were in a day. From sunrise to sunset every man and boy was now hard at work, chopping, burning, and clearing the ground to put in the spring crops. Not an hour was to be lost, for the sun shone bright and warm, the grass sprang up, the leaves came out, and flowers burst forth, and it seemed as if the summer had begun as soon as the winter had ended. The summer was hot, and soon ripened the crops, and the harvest was good and plentiful.

CHAPTER X.

FOUR years had passed away, and Michael Hale and his family had begun to reap the fruits of their industry. They had forty acres of land cleared, enough to bear crops. Two acres were planted with apple-trees, which already yielded a large supply of fruit. The apples were packed in casks, and were then fit to be sent off to distant markets. Some were peeled, cut in slices, dried in the sun, and hung up for home winter use.

They had several cows and oxen, and a flock of

sheep, and pigs, and poultry. As they frequently killed oxen, and sheep, and pigs, for their own use, they were able to form a store of fat for making candles and soap at home. Indeed, Michael was rapidly becoming a substantial farmer. He was not, however, without his sorrows and trials.

Susan had never completely recovered, and the year after he settled at Thornhill she had died of consumption. Fanny Kemp watched over and attended her as a sister to the last, and now so completely filled her place, that no one would have thought that she was not a daughter.

Rob, indeed, hoped to make her one ere long. He had loved her for many years ; but, like a good son, felt that he ought not to marry and set up for himself till he had helped his father to settle comfortably. He now opened the matter to his father. " There's one thing, however, I want to do first, that is to see you and mother in a well-plastered house," he said, after he had got Michael's consent to his marriage. " We'll get that put up during the summer, and this old log house will do for Fanny and me for another year or two. There's only one thing I ask. Don't tell mother what we are about. It will be a pleasant surprise to her. She was saying, only the other day, that she wished that she had a house with another floor."

When Mr. Landon heard that Rob was going to marry Fanny Kemp, he called him aside one day, and said, " If your father will give you twenty acres of his land, I will give you another twenty acres alongside

it, and will, besides, stand the expense of a bee, and have a house put up for you in no time. Your father was kind to me when I was burnt out of my house, and has given me much good advice, by which I have profited. His example made me work in a way I do not think I should have otherwise done."

Rob thanked Mr. Landon very much, but told him of his wish first to help his father build and settle in a comfortable plastered house.

"You set a good example, Rob; and I hope other young men will follow it. A dutiful son will make a good husband, and little Fanny deserves one."

The new house was to be in a very different style from the old one. The first thing was to burn the lime. It was found on the top of the hill, and brought down in carts to a piece of ground, the trees on which had just been cut down. These were now piled up in a large heap, and the limestone placed above. By the time the log heap was burned, the lime was made, but it took some time to clear it from the ashes. A wood of fine elm-trees grew near. A number of them were felled to form the walls. In many respects, a well-built log house, when well plastered, is better than one of brick or stone in that climate. At the end of the lake a saw-mill had lately been established. Rob, David, and Tommy set out in the canoe to bring home a supply of planks from the mill. Rob took his gun, in the hopes of getting a shot at wild-fowl. On their way, when passing an island, a deer, which seemed to have taken refuge there, started out, and plunging into the water, swam rapidly across the lake.

Rob fired, and hit the deer, which made directly for the shore. Just as it neared it, some Indians who had been fishing in a canoe overtook it; and weak from loss of blood, it was killed by a few blows from their paddles. The Indians seemed to think it their prize.

“Come shore—you have part,” said their chief, in broken English.



CANADIAN INDIANS IN THEIR WAR DRESSES.

Rob thought this was better than the risk of a quarrel. Near the spot was an encampment of Indians. Those in the canoe let him know that they would consult their friends as to how much of the deer he ought to have.

Rob and his companions climbed up the hill, and watched the Indians, who stood grouped below. They were dark-skinned men, of a dull copper hue. They were in their full war dresses. Their cheeks were mostly painted red, but some had put on other colours. In their heads they wore feathers and bead ornaments. Their coats were of untanned leather,

ornamented with beads, as were their leggings and boots, or mocassins. Some, however, were dressed more comfortably, in coats cut out of blankets, making the dark borders come in as ornaments. Their tents, or wigwams, were in the shape of a sugar-loaf. They were formed of long poles, stuck in the ground, about six inches apart; the round being about ten feet across, and the poles fastened together at the top. This was thickly covered with large pieces of birch bark. Mats were spread on the ground, except in the middle, where a place was left for a fire. On one side a hole was left to serve as a door, with a blanket hung upon a line across it. This is the Indian's house throughout the year, and in winter, when put up in a sheltered spot, can, with the help of a fire inside, be kept quite warm. Rob and David went inside one of them. The women, who were dressed in blanket, petticoats, and cloaks, received them very kindly, and laughed and chatted away as if their visitors could understand what they said. Lines were fastened from side to side across the tent, on which were hung household utensils, clothes, and all sorts of things, and a sort of cradle, with a baby fastened on to it. The little creature could not move hands or feet, but seemed perfectly happy.

In a little time the men came back, saying that a haunch and a leg should be theirs. These parts were placed in the canoe; and, after a friendly parting with the Indians, Rob and his companions, paddled off towards the mill.

It was late when they reached it; but the weather

was fine, there was a bright moon at night, and they determined to start back at once. They bought three thousand feet of boards, with which they formed a raft. Soon after the sun rose they reached the landing place near their home.

Mr. Landon kept to his promise to call a bee, and in three days a substantial log house was erected, and the planks laid down of the ground and upper floors. The rest of the work, it was left to Rob and his brothers to finish.

Great was the surprise of Mrs. Hale, when her sons, with her husband and Fanny, took her to see the house which she had thought was being built for some stranger coming to the settlement.

“It’s yours and father’s, mother, just an offering from your children,” said Rob. “If you will let Fanny and me have the old one, we hope to make ourselves happy in it.”

Mrs. Hale thanked her dutiful children, and thanked God for having brought them to a country where their industry and perseverance had been so fully rewarded.



JOHN ARMSTRONG, THE SOLDIER;

OR,

BARRACK AND CAMP LIFE

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

CHAPTER I.

I do not think that any one will care to know why I turned soldier. This much I may say, though ; my native village was not far off some barracks within twenty miles of London ; I had often watched the soldiers at drill, and had talked to a good many of them, till I fancied that I knew something about a soldier's life. Now I wish to tell you what it really is, not only in comfortable barracks at home, but in camp abroad, in heat and cold, and before the enemy. I had my reasons for wishing not to enlist near home, and so bidding my parents and brothers and sisters good-bye, they not crying out, ' Don't go,' at break of day, one fine October morning, in the year 1850, I started off for London without a penny in my pocket, or any other property than the clothes on my back, good health, and a stout heart.

I had walked a fair bit of the way, when I felt very hungry. I had taken nothing before I left home. Food I must have. Before me I saw a public-house, The Rabbits. A number of people were in the bar-room. " I'll tell them I'm going for a soldier, and

ask for food. They'll not refuse me," I thought. I stepped in, and told them my tale. They all seemed much pleased. "You must have pluck in you, my lad, to do that," said one; "you deserve a breakfast." "You'll have no want of masters," observed another. "Still somebody must do the work." Most of them had some remark to make. In the end, they ordered me a thorough good breakfast of eggs and ham, and hoped I might never have a worse wherever I might go. This set me up till I reached the Tower of London, near the Thames, where I had been advised to go. The Guards were doing duty there. A sergeant I met asked me if I wished to join them. I said, "Yes." So he at once placed me under a mark to measure my height, but I was not tall enough for the Guards. He then asked me if I would like to join any other regiment. I answered, "Yes ; I've no choice." He seemed pleased, and at once marched me off to Westminster, at the other end of London, where a recruiting company was stationed. He there took me to a sergeant of the 44th regiment of foot. After I had wished my old friend good-bye, my new friend asked me should I pass the doctor's examination if I wished to join them. Of course I said "Yes." And after he had asked me whether I was "married" or "a widower," to which I said "No ;" with other questions, he put out his hand, and offered me a shilling, in the name of Her Majesty the Queen. I took it, and was from that moment a soldier, provided I passed the usual examination. I felt very tired, and somewhat out of spirits with so many strangers in

different uniforms around me, and was very glad when the sergeant told me that he had paid for a bed for me, and that I might go to it whenever I liked. I was very thankful to put my head on the pillow. Thus ended my first day in the army. I had time next morning to think over some good advice given me by an old sergeant at the barracks.

“Remember, my lad,” said he, “when you get your pay, don’t scatter it about as if it would never come to an end. There’s nothing you so soon see the last of. When you find one of your new comrades particularly civil, find out what sort of a man he really is before you treat him or lend him cash. If a non-commissioned officer is very polite and slackens the reins of discipline to favour you, stand clear of him. He’ll pluck you clean and then eat you up. Keep out of temptation, and show that you are going to be a sober, steady man, by consorting only with those who are sober and steady. Never lose your temper, even when wronged by a superior. Be smart in learning the drills and all your other duties. It is better to be thought well of by your officers and by a few good men, than by all the wild chaps in the regiment. And remember, Jack, my boy, what an old soldier says, that while you do your duty to your Queen and your country, you do not forget your duty to your God. A man may be a good soldier and a good Christian at the same time. He’ll be all the better soldier by being a good Christian. To know how to be that, read your Bible, lad, say your prayers, and attend the house of prayer whenever you can.”

I wish that I had always followed my old friend's advice. I did often remember it, and gained much advantage from having done so.

I was down by six o'clock; and in the common room I met a number of young men just enlisted, like myself. There was plenty of talking—questions asked and answered: “What regiment are you for?” “Where do you come from?” “Why did you enlist?” “Do you think you'll pass the doctor?”

This talk was interrupted by the sergeant exclaiming, “Now then, you youngsters, look out, and get ready for the doctor's inspection.”

“We haven't had any breakfast; we want breakfast,” cried several voices.

On this the sergeant ordered in breakfast for us, in the shape of a half-quartern loaf and two ounces of butter for every four recruits. That over, we were marched to the bath-rooms.

“Now then, young 'uns, strip; get into that bath; scrub and clean yourselves,” cried the sergeant; “for it's time that you were at the inspection-room.”

Having done as we were ordered, we marched off to the inspection-room, where we waited till the doctor arrived, who was to say whether or not we had bodily health and strength to serve Her Majesty. We had been waiting, not a little anxious, when the sergeant cried out,—

“Recruit Armstrong, pass at once into the inspection-room.”

On hearing my name, I ran into the room. The

doctor looked at me for a moment, and then said,—

“Stand on one leg.” I did so. “Now on the other. Bend over until you touch the ground.”

I had seen the recruits at the barracks do that, and had tried it often ; so did it with ease.

“Rise again,” said the doctor. “Hop on your right leg. Now on your left. Put out your arms at right angles to your body. Cough. Can you see well ? Read those dots.”

“Four, sir,” said I.

“How many are there now ? ”

“Two.”

“Pull that machine. Blow that machine. That will do ; you can go,” said the doctor. “Sergeant-Major, send in the next one.”

There were thirteen of us sent in one after the other ; but only two, Dick Marshall, a Suffolk lad, and myself, were passed,—the rest having some defect which made them unfit for soldiers.

On our return, the sergeant asked Marshall and me if we would mind being transferred to the 90th regiment, stationed at Manchester.

We answered, “Not in the least.”

On that we handed back our shillings to the sergeant of the 44th regiment ; the recruiting-sergeant of the 90th Light Infantry putting fresh shillings in our hands, and thus enlisting us in his regiment. We were then taken to a magistrate, and sworn in to serve Her Majesty for a period of ten years, if at home ; or if on foreign service, not to exceed twelve.

We finished our day with a dinner, of which I may say that I have eaten many a better ; and we then took a stroll about Westminster, and had a look at the fine old abbey and the Houses of Parliament, where the laws are made. I may just remark that a soldier, if he keeps his eyes open, and himself out of the beer-shop, may, wherever he goes, see a number of places and things worth seeing, which will give him something to think about and talk about to the end of his life.

The next day, after breakfast, we were marched off to “pass the colonel ;” that is, that he might see us, and say whether he would have us. He arrived at noon.

“Now, my boy, get under that standard,” said he to me.

I did so, and found that I measured five feet six and three-quarter inches.

“Is he all right, doctor ?” he asked.

“Perfectly so, sir,” was the answer.

“That will do, my boy ; you can go.”

The trial I thought so much about was over. Marshall and I had now a few shillings handed over to us, and were fast bound for our agreed-on term of servitude, unless at any time we might be able to buy ourselves out of the army. For the next three days we had nothing to do but eat our meals and walk about till five o’clock, when we had to appear at the rendezvous ; that is, the house where the recruiting-officer had his head-quarters.

On a dark morning—the 5th of November—we

were roused up at half-past four, and, after parade, were marched off to the railway-station to proceed to Manchester, the barracks at which place we reached at ten at night. We were at once sent to a room full of beds, ranged along the two walls. All were occupied except two, which were turned up. These were soon made ready, and Marshall and I crept into them. We did not speak to any of the men, and no one took any notice of us. Though we were both well tired, what with the strangeness of the place, and the sentinel every half-hour calling out the number of his post and "All's well," neither of us could sleep till near morning, when the bugle's sound quickly made us start to our feet. In about five minutes the bedding of each bed was neatly folded up, and the iron bedstead turned up over it, with a pair of trowsers, folded into three parts, placed on each, and a forage-cap and stock above. A line was then stretched along the room to see if all the beds were made up of the exact size. This done, the orderly-sergeant came into the room to see that everything was correctly arranged; and if any bed was not done up properly, it was immediately pulled to pieces, to be done up by the owner afresh. All the men not on duty, except the recruits, turned out for half an hour's drill in undress uniform. The orderly-sergeant having taken down Marshall's name and mine in his memorandum-book, went out to drill his company. They were dismissed at half-past seven, but the recruits were kept a quarter of an hour longer, when the breakfast bugle sounded. The room or-

derly, I should say, is a man told off to keep the room in order, to draw all rations for the day for his room, to have meat and vegetables weighed, to see that they are correct in quantity and quality, and to take them to the cook of his company. At the sound of the bugle, the orderly-men ran to the cook-house for their coffee, a pint of which was served out to each man in a white basin, with a pound of somewhat brownish bread. Breakfast over, the orderlies cleared away, while the rest of the men commenced cleaning their appointments for parade, which was to be at eleven o'clock. This was in full uniform and light marching order. The recruits were to appear in plain clothes.

A sergeant came to Marshall and me, and told us to fall in. He then put us through our facings.

"Right dress. Eyes front. Stand at ease," he exclaimed.

From having often stood at ease, when watching the men drilling, without thinking of what I was about, I fell into the proper position.

"To what regiment did you belong, young man, before you joined the 90th?" asked the sergeant, thinking that he had caught a deserter.

"To none," I answered.

"Not so sure of that," said he.

"A man may have learned to drill without being a soldier," I remarked quietly.

He said nothing; but I had better have held my tongue.

After the parade, we fell in and proceeded to the

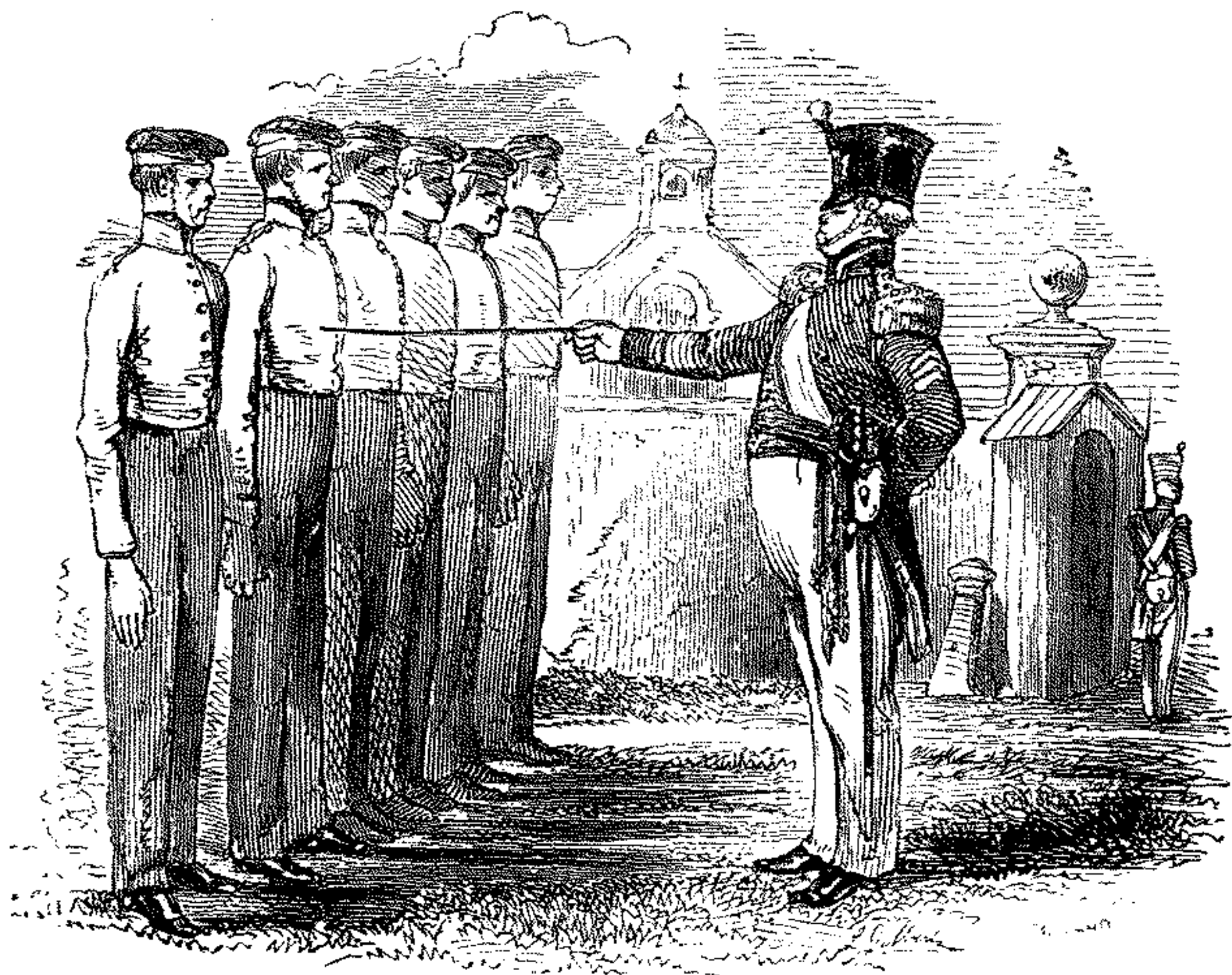
orderly-room, where the colonel again inspected us, and asked the usual questions: "Can you read?" "Yes." "Can you write?" "Yes." And so on.

"That will do, lad," said the colonel. "Sergeant-major, that recruit will be posted to F Company."

The sergeant of that company advanced. "Now, my lad," said he, "come on."

I followed him to the room to which I was posted, where he directed an old soldier to look after me and give me all necessary information. My instructor's name was Higgins. He was a good-natured man, and had seen much service, on the strength of which he indulged in the pleasure of grumbling and finding fault with things in general, rather than with people in particular. After he had showed me the bed which I was to consider my own, and other things, the men came about me, and asked me a number of questions, which I answered frankly; and thus the time passed till one o'clock, when dinner was ready.

The dinner was a very good one, and all the mess things, plates, basins, knives, forks, and spoons, struck me as being very nice and clean. Higgins asked me to sit down; but, as I cast my eye over my rough not over-clean countrified dress, I felt ashamed of myself among so many fine-looking red jackets, forgetting that every man present had once been much in the same state that I then was. All, however, went pleasantly enough till three o'clock, when the recruits fell in for drill, as did the regiment. The drill of the regiment lasted only half an hour, while ours lasted an hour. Our drill-sergeant, Her-



bert, a jolly good fellow, called us to the position of attention. After we had been drilling for some time, he asked, as the other sergeant had done, if I had before been in the army; and when I told him that I had not, he ordered me to stand at ease. My comrade kept eyeing me whenever he could, wondering what was going to happen. I now learned what I have since found always to be the case, that every scrap of knowledge which a man can pick up is likely to come into use some day or other. The drilling I had got on W—— Common for my amusement now did me good service. It, in the first place, gained me Sergeant Herbert's favour, and, making me feel superior to the other recruits, gave me self-respect, which helped me much to keep steady. On being dismissed drill, I went to my room, where Higgins began to teach me the "bugle sounds," and another

old soldier "the manual drill," and other things ; so that I soon found out that, whatever I might think of myself, I had plenty yet to learn.

At half-past four we went to tea, each man getting a pint of tea and a quarter of a pound of white bread. After that meal, some in dress and others in undress uniform, went into town ; others remained in barracks, playing drafts and other games, until "tattoo," at half-past eight, when the first post sounded, and all men about the town, on hearing it, immediately returned to barracks, or should have done so. In the meantime the orderly-sergeants called the rolls of the respective rooms, noted all the men absent, and gave lists of them to the regimental orderly-sergeant. He again called the roll, and reported all still absent to the officer of the day, who reported them to the adjutant.* On receiving the report, the adjutant sent the picket† out to bring them in, when those out without leave were confined to barracks, or received some other punishment the following day. This done, the staff and non-commissioned officers‡ are dismissed to their rooms.

* The adjutant is chosen from among the lieutenants or captains, for his steadiness and knowledge of military duties. He is the commanding officer's principal assistant. All orders are passed through him, and he has to see that the young officers and non-commissioned officers are perfect in their drill, and many other things.

† A picket is a body of men told off for these and other duties. A camp is guarded by them. An out-lying picket is placed at some distance from it to give notice of the approach of an enemy.

‡ Non-commissioned officers are chosen from among the men for their superior knowledge and steadiness. They are so called because they are appointed by the colonel, and have not received commissions from the

Such was my first day in barracks, and such were many days of my life afterwards. Such indeed is a soldier's ordinary day. On the Sunday there is a parade instead of drills, and the men are marched to their respective churches ; those of the Church of England to theirs, the Presbyterians to theirs, the Roman Catholics to theirs. On the last day of the month, the regiment falls in for parade generally, in England, in great coats, when every man borne on its strength must answer to his name, or be accounted for as "on duty," "on furlough" "in imprisonment," "deserted," "deceased," "in hospital." Regiments are also marched out of barracks into the country with bands playing and colours flying, and there are reviews and sham fights occasionally. Soldiers, too, are placed as sentries before officers' quarters and other places, and they have many other duties to perform even in the piping times of peace. I shall soon have to show the life they lead in war-time. Theirs is not an idle life, but still they have plenty of time for amusement, and what is more, for improving themselves if they will but wisely take advantage of it.

CHAPTER II.

MEN enlist for many reasons, the greater number because they are out of work, and do not know how

Queen. Many, however, for their bravery and high conduct, have received commissions, and have risen to be captains and even to higher rank. Those thus promoted frequently become adjutants of their regiments.

else they are to live. These are the most contented, because they do not expect much, and find themselves, if they are steady, pretty comfortable, well fed, and well clothed. The worst off are lazy fellows, who join, expecting to have an easy, idle life, with little to do. Besides drilling and learning the use of his weapons and the various movements to be performed to get him into a soldier-like shape, with parades and inspections, and field days, and reviews, and sham fights, and marching out in the winter, and sentinel, fatigue, and picket duties,—he has his appointments and arms to keep in order, and in his turn, his mess things, room, and other places to clean. And often he has heavy work; roads to make, fortifications of various sorts to throw up, and other similar tasks required by an army in the field; still, after all, there is no work harder than most of the men would have had to go through if they had remained at home.

About the end of February, the regiment was ordered to proceed to Ireland. A special train took us to the large town of Liverpool, from which ships sail to all parts of the world. Getting out of the train, we formed, and marched down to the quay by the river Mersey, where a large steamer was waiting for us. We went on board, and she soon began to paddle down the river on her way to Dublin. It was the first time I had ever been at sea with water around on every side, as far as the eye could reach. We soon however caught sight of the Irish coast, and very pretty I thought the bay of Dublin as we steamed into it. I now began to find out one of the advan-

tages of a soldier's life; that is, visiting new places. I did not then think how many strange places I should see during my time of service. Going on shore, we formed, and marched to a railway-station, when the train carried us westward to Cork. Here the regiment was stationed. Some of the companies, and mine among them, remained at head-quarters, and others were sent out on detachment duty at various places. Soldiers on detachment often meet with adventures of various sorts, especially in Ireland. They are stationed at different small towns and villages, where the inhabitants, especially the fair sex, are apt to make a great deal of them, from not being so accustomed to see red coats as are those in large places. I must hurry over the events at this period, that I may have space to give accounts of those of more stirring times.

I had made up my mind on joining, to be a steady man, and I was glad to remain at head-quarters, because I knew that there my conduct would be observed by my superior officers. There were temptations enough to act differently, but I knew that a few glasses of whiskey or any irregularity would in a minute cloud all my prospects. I had, it must be understood, no advantages above the rest of my comrades. I was but myself a country lad, about the youngest in the regiment, but I had heard an officer remark that there was the making of a good soldier in me; and so I gave my mind and heart to the work, and that made me like it.

I have said nothing about Marshall. He was in

a different company from mine, and had been on detachment. After some time his company returned to head-quarters. He seemed much changed, and from being a brisk, lively lad, was sad and silent. We were always friends, though he did not take to soldiering as heartily as I did. I asked him what was the matter. He told me at last. He had lost his heart to a farmer's daughter. She was very pretty and young and good. He had met her coming home on a car, with her aunt and a female cousin with three men from a "wake." That is the name given in Ireland, to a burying party. The men, as is generally the case after such meetings, were very drunk. The car broke down. The other women were hurt, and the men could not help them. Marshall arrived at the moment, mended the car, left the drunken men to find their way home as best they could, put the old lady upon it and walked home at its side with Kathleen O'Neil, who had no fancy for again mounting. Kathleen was very grateful, and so was her aunt and cousin, and asked him to come again another day. That of course he did, not only once, but very often. One of the men who had been in the car, Shane McDermot, was, Marshall found, a lover of Kathleen's, but she did not like him. No wonder, for he was a rough, savage-looking fellow. Kathleen at length showed that she liked Marshall, and she warned him to beware of Shane. Dick was a stout-hearted fellow, and said he did not fear him. A man would think twice before he would attempt to shoot a soldier, not but what officers and men too have been shot in Ireland.

Marshall continued his visits as usual, and the oftener he went the more in love he grew with Kathleen, and the more, it was clear, she loved him.

One evening, after the tattoo had sounded, as he was hurrying home, a shot whistled by his ear, and directly afterwards two men set upon him with their shillalahs. One he knocked over with his fist, and drawing his bayonet, put the other to flight. He was pretty certain that the man he knocked over was Shane, but he could not stop to see; indeed he thought that it was wiser to push on to his quarters.

When he told Kathleen the next day, she was very unhappy, and said that she should be the cause of his death. Dick told her not to be afraid, and finished by asking her to marry him. She said that she would with great pleasure, and follow him, like a true good wife, round the world. This made Dick perfectly happy. When he came, however, to speak to the captain of his company, he found that as he was one of the youngest men in the regiment, he had no chance of getting leave; and that if he married without leave, his wife would have none of the privileges of a soldier's wife, and that he would be treated as a single man. The last time he saw her she promised that she would marry no one else, and ever remain faithful to him.

My company afterwards went on detachment, and I was stationed at the same place that Marshall had been. He had begged me to go and see Kathleen. When her family knew that I was his friend, they treated me very kindly. I went to the house several

times. Shane was there one evening. I was not surprised that she did not like him. There was a scowl on his brow and a glance in his eye, as he turned towards me, which made me think that he was very likely to have a shot at me some dark night, if he could get the chance. I would not accuse any man of wishing to do such a thing, and there are thousands of Irish who would be horrified at the thought of taking the life of a fellow-creature, but such deeds are too common in that country. The reason why this is so I must leave to others who ought to know more about the matter than I do, to say. It must be remembered that Shane had already tried his hand at the work, so that I did not think ill of him without cause. Whenever I had spare time I went to see the O'Neils. When I went away at night, I walked quickly along in the middle of the road, feeling pretty sure that Shane would try to treat me as he did Marshall.

I had, I should say, soon after I came to the place, picked a poor boy out of a pond, when more than half drowned, and carried him home; and as I found the family very poor and wretched, I left some money with them. As I never spent any money in liquor or other folly, I had always a few spare shillings in my pocket. Pat Nolan's mother, as far as words went, seemed very grateful, but I never put much trust in them: and though I had several times gone to see the Nolans, I scarcely thought about what first took me to the cottage.

One day I had been sent by my captain with a

letter to a house three miles off. I was kept there some time, and it was nearly dark when, on my way back, I came to a wild, open place, half common and half bog, with nearly a mile of road across it. Just as I got to a small bush near the road, I heard a voice say, "Hist, hist, soldier; turn back and come with me. It's a long way I'll be after taking ye, but it's better than being shot any how."

"Who are you, and where are you?" I asked, seeing no one.

"It's me, Pat Nolan, then," answered the ragged little urchin, creeping from under the bush. "Maybe he's not far off just now, with that thief of the world, Dan Fegan, and one or two others looking out for ye."

I was half inclined to go on in spite of Pat's warning. "Why should I be afraid of those Irish chaps?" I thought to myself. But little Pat begged so hard that I would not, that I began to think it would be wise to follow his advice.

"Och ahone! ahone! you'll be kilt entirely if you go now!" exclaimed the boy, crying and pulling at me to go in the direction he wanted.

I felt that it would be foolish to run into danger for no purpose, and that at all events I should have only rather a longer walk than I had expected. "Well, Pat, I'll go with you," said I.

The little chap gave a leap with delight. "Arrah! then there's no time to be lost!" he exclaimed, leading the way down a lane which skirted the edge of the bog.

I followed, and had to step out fast to keep up with him.

“Ye’ll have to lape over some pools may be, but it’s all hard below where I’ll lead ye, so don’t be afraid now,” he whispered, putting his finger to his lips.

I laughed aloud.

“Hist, hist; he’ll be after hearing you,” he said, in the same tone as before; “but come on now.”

He turned and led the way across the bog. I leaped when I saw him leap, and kept directly in his footsteps, and often the ground quaked as I passed, or moved up and down like a raft at sea. As we moved on, the water got up to my ankles; then over them. I thought that Pat had lost his way, but he kept on without stopping or turning to one side or the other. The water got deeper and deeper, indeed there seemed to be nothing but water around; then once more it began to shoal, and at last I found that we were walking on dry ground, but still of a very boggy nature. At last we were in something like a path, with peat-holes on either side. It was quite dark before we reached the heath or dry ground I was looking for. Pat even then, I found, kept away from the road I was to have taken. After going a little way I thought that I saw some figures through the gloom. Pat thought so too, for he pulled at my coat-sleeve, and whispered to me to crouch down. I did so for some time, and then again we pushed on. Pat led the way till we got into a road I knew, leading direct to my quarters. He then told me to hurry

on, and before I had time to put my hand in my pockets to give him some money, he was off.

At muster-roll that evening, one of our men, Jackson, did not answer to his name. He had been sent in the direction I had gone. The next morning he did not appear. A party, of which I formed one, was sent out to look for him. Not far from some bushes, with a hole behind them,—a place made for an ambush,—we came upon some blood in the road. We hunted about. There were the marks of men's feet at the edge of the road. After hunting some time, one of our men cried out, "Here he is!"

There, in a hole, half covered with water, lay our comrade. At first it was thought that he might have fallen in, but two dark marks by the side of his head showed where a brace of slugs had entered it. I felt sure that they had been intended for me. It seemed as if I had wronged him. Poor fellow! we bore him sadly homeward. I judged it right to tell my captain what I knew of the matter, and a warrant was issued for the apprehension of Shane McDermot. Parties were sent out to search for him, but he was not to be found. There were plenty among the country people to help him. The only thing some of them seemed to think that he had done wrong was, that he had shot the wrong man. Kathleen was thankful that I had escaped, but glad to be rid of Shane. It was not likely that he would venture back to the neighbourhood while we were there.

After some time, my company was ordered back to head-quarters, to be relieved by another. Kathleen

bade me tell Marshall that she remained faithful to him, and loving as ever.

I gave the message to Marshall. It raised his spirits, and yet he could scarcely believe that so pretty a girl, and one in some respects so superior to himself, should care for a poor soldier. However I told him that it was a good reason why he should attend to his duties more strictly, and try to obtain promotion to be able to support her. The wife of even a non-commissioned officer has a hard time of it; of a man, still worse; but worst off of all is the wife of one who marries without leave.

On getting back, I found a notice posted that all men wishing to go on "furlough" must send in their names to the captains of companies at once. I sent in mine, as I had saved enough pay for my expenses, and through the kindness of the sergeant-major and adjutant obtained a furlough for six weeks, to proceed from Cork to B—— in the county of E——, and took my passage in the steamer to London. We had a fine view of the coast from the Land's End in Cornwall, to the North Foreland in Kent.

Landing in London, I went to an inn, breakfasted, cleaned myself so as to look as smart as I could, and set off home. How different I felt now to what I did leaving home a year ago. I opened the door and looked in. They were all at dinner. What cries of delight and shrieks and laughter there were, though my sisters vowed they scarcely knew me, I had grown so stout and manly. I was made heartily

welcome, and had a very happy time of it. I went to see my old friends at the barracks; I was welcomed by them too, but many had been sent off to India.

I must be moving on though with my story. After spending a happy five weeks at home, I returned to Cork at the proper time. I was rather vexed to find the morning after, that all men returned off furlough were to fall in for "recruit drill." However, as I was the youngest of any of them, I had no reason to complain. I thought "I'll just show that I don't require it;" so I pulled myself together, and was dismissed recruit drill next day.

Soon after this I gained what it had been my hope from the first to get—that is, promotion,—and was made lance-corporal. I wished that Marshall could have got the same, for Kathleen's sake, but he was not so fortunate. The difference was this,—I had a taste for soldiering, born with me perhaps: he had not.

I was soon after sent off on detachment duty to Spike Island, in the Cove of Cork or Queenstown Harbour. Our duty was to guard a prison full of convicts, not the pleasantest in the world, though I well knew that there wasn't a man within those walls who did not richly deserve his lot. I only wish that evil-disposed men knew better than they do what it is to be shut up in a place of the sort; they would take some pains to gain an honest livelihood rather than run the risk of being sent there.

The harbour is a very beautiful one, surrounded

almost by high hills, many of them well wooded, and so is the whole way up to Cork. While I was there a new batch of convicts came in ; among them I saw a face I felt sure I knew. It was that of Shane McDermot. He cast a look of surprise at me, as much as to say, "Why, I thought that I had shot you." I could not exchange words with him ; but the more I watched his countenance, the more certain I was that it was him. I concluded that he had committed a crime in another part of the country, and had been convicted, and sent on here. There he was, and there I hoped, for the sake of my friends, he would remain.

I was not sorry when we were ordered back to head-quarters. Soon afterwards the regiment went to Dublin, where we were stationed, scattered about in different barracks, and doing garrison duty for two years or more. During that time I again went on furlough. If I had been proud of appearing at home before, I was prouder still now to return as a non-commissioned officer, and I felt pretty sure that as I had gained one step I should gain another. I was heartily welcomed, but somehow or other that second going home was not equal to the first, three years before. Many changes had taken place among my friends : some had gone away, some were dead, some married. Still I was very happy, but I had an idea that it might be a long time before I should go back to the old place.

On my return to Dublin I had to go on recruit drill for a day, as before, when the sergeant-major

gave me and others a hint, which we wisely took, to have our hair cut for the next parade. For another year after this we were kept here on garrison duty, with some pretty hard field-days in the Phoenix Park, and the usual marchings out in winter.

CHAPTER III.

THE sort of life we led in Dublin was all very well in its way, but for my part I wished for something more stirring. There seemed now to be a chance of our getting it. The papers began to talk of war with the Russians. They had been ill-treating the Turks. Now the Turks are our friends. I do not know exactly why, for I cannot say much in their favour. In this case the Russians had behaved very ill. During a thick fog, a large fleet of their ships had sailed into a Turkish port, and blown up and burnt a number of Turkish vessels, killing no less than 5,000 Turks on that day. This made the English very angry. It was clear, too, that the Russians intended getting hold of the chief city, Constantinople, and the country of the Turks. Our hopes of war increased when we heard that the English and French fleets had gone up the Black Sea, and then that the Guards and other regiments were to be sent up the Mediterranean to Malta, and then on to a place called Varna, on the shore of the Black Sea, in the country of the Turks, and near Russia. It was said also that the Russians were collecting an army in a part of the country

called the Crimea, in the Black Sea, where there is a strong fortress with a town and harbour called Sebastopol. We, of course, every day looked eagerly into the papers to see what regiments were ordered abroad, but the 90th was not among those named. This greatly vexed both officers and men, and some fretted and fumed very much at it. It was the daily talk at the mess-tables of all ranks.

“More regiments ordered for foreign service,” exclaimed Marshall ; for, strange to say, he was as eager as any one about going. He wanted to be doing something, poor fellow, to keep his mind away from Kathleen. “See, here’s a list,—others talked of, but no mention made of the 90th.”

“Let well alone, lads, and be content,” observed Higgins. “Fighting is all very well to talk about, but the reality is precious rough work ; and so you’ll find it, when your turn comes,—mark my words.”

Not long after this, on the 14th of March, the regiment was on parade, when the commanding officer read a letter to us which he had just received. It was to the effect that a few men might volunteer for the 42nd Royal Highlanders and 79th Cameronian Highlanders. We all knew what that meant, that the 90th was to be kept at home, and that those two regiments were to fill up their numbers for foreign service. When, therefore, the word “volunteers come to the front,” was given, instead of forty, which was the whole number required, forty from each company stepped forward, making four hundred in all. Marshall and I were among them. It

was an anxious time with us till it was known who was selected. I was among the first chosen. Marshall's was the last name. I was glad not to be separated from my old comrade. The volunteers being ordered to parade in front of the commanding officer, he in a very kind way gave us some good advice. He then expressed his earnest wishes for our welfare, and hoped that he should never hear of any of those who had served in the 90th, getting into disgrace, but that when next he might see us, instead of privates and corporals, we should have become sergeants. Every word he said I took in greedily, and honestly believe that I profited by his advice.

There was no time lost. Not many days after that, on the 28th of March, war was formally declared by Great Britain against Russia. We, with volunteers from other regiments, at once proceeded by passenger steamer from Dublin to Portsmouth. Marshall had barely time to write a short note to Kathleen. He told her of the regiment he had joined, and where he expected to go, and promised to remain faithful to her as long as he lived.

It was on St. Patrick's-day, that we landed at the dockyard, to the number of two hundred, in all sorts of uniforms, the men out of a dirty steamer not looking over clean. We then marched to the barracks at Anglesea, where that "braw" regiment, the well-known "Forty-and-twa" were stationed. The adjutant and captains of companies then came to inspect us, and choose men for their respective companies. The captain of the grenadier company had the first

choice, and the captain of the light company the second. I with eight of our men, including Marshall, had the honour of being selected by him. I was posted to a room at once, and ordered to get my kit ready in a quarter of an hour for inspection. It was fortunately nearly a new one, and looked clean. The captain was pleased, and ordered me not to show it for a month. He then inquired how long I had been a non-commissioned officer, and directed me to attend at the orderly-room to copy orders and to take the detail of the company for the next day. After writing it down, he told me to read it to him.

“Yes ; that will do,” he said. “Are you anxious to obtain promotion ? ”

“Yes, sir, ” I answered, not a little pleased.

“Very well ; you have come with a good character from your late regiment, maintain it, and you will be sure of promotion in the 42nd. I understand that you can drill very well. I shall see how you get on, and if in a satisfactory manner, I will recommend you to the adjutant.”

The next Monday I was ordered to drill a squad, while the adjutant stood at a distance watching me. I did my best, and when drill was over he sent for me, and asked if I would like to be struck off duty for the purpose of drilling the second squad of recruits. Of course I said yes, but begged to be allowed a few days first, to get used to the duties of the regiment.

I had good reason to be satisfied with the change I had made. I had only been a few days in the regi-

ment, and was already looked upon with consideration and respect. How was this? Had I greater advantages than any other young man? No, except that I had a taste for soldiering. I had simply kept steady and done my duty to the very best of my power. I had not been idle with my books either. I had read a good deal, and practised writing and ciphering, so that I wrote a really good hand, and could keep accounts well. I mention this to show what is required of a young man in the army, who wishes to work his way up to become a non-commissioned officer. It is through the sergeants that the discipline of a regiment is maintained, and they must possess the education I have spoken of, and be intelligent, steady, honest men, or things will go badly in that regiment.

For the best part of the next two months we were engaged every day in rifle practice, and I had the satisfaction of making some good hits. Now came the order we had been long eagerly looking for, to embark forthwith for the Crimea. Loud cheers were given by the numerous lookers on as, on the 26th of May, we went on board the transport, and we cheered loudly in return. We little thought then of what we had to go through, or how many of our fine fellows would leave their bones in a foreign land. Everything was well arranged on board. Strict discipline was kept up. Our rations were good, and regularly served out to us; and as the weather was fine, we had as pleasant a voyage as we could wish. We landed at Scutari, a place on the Bosphorus, the strait that leads into the Black

Sea, opposite the big city of Constantinople. Here we remained for three weeks hard at work, drilling. Some of the troops were in huge barracks, and we with others were encamped. Fighting was going on at a town called Silistria, between the Turks, who bravely defended it, helped by two or three English officers, and the Russians, who had tried to take it, but could not. A great many Turks were brought into the hospital badly wounded, and one poor fellow had both his arms and legs cut off. He was the subject of conversation for many an evening in our tents. We were in the light division, under Sir Colin Campbell. The first British soldier who lost his life during the war was killed here by his own rifle, which sent a shot through his leg above the knee. Here also we were supplied with the Minié rifle, having hitherto used the old percussion smooth bore.

Scutari is a beautiful spot, with the blue waters of the strait, and the glittering white city, surrounded by dark trees, and vessels and gay boats of all sorts moving about. We should have been content to remain there if we had not thought on the work before us. In July we again embarked, and proceeded to Varna, in company with numerous vessels, crowded with English, French, and Turks. We and the French were allies, helping the Turks, though there were only 7000 of them, while we and the French had each rather more than 26,000 men of all arms.

Varna is on the shore of the Black Sea, not far from the Crimea, and belongs to the Turks. We were here encamped with the Guards and other regi-

ments on a dreary plain in different villages some way out of Varna. We were kept hard at work with frequent drills, getting ready for real fighting. One night we were roused up with the sound of heavy firing in a wood close to us. The bugle sounded to arms. We sprang to our feet, but before we could get under arms the supposed enemy was away. They were a company of the 60th Rifles and Rifle Brigade, supplied with a few rounds of blank ammunition. This sort of work took place frequently, to accustom us to surprises, and not without reason, as we found to our cost at Inkerman. The Rifles seemed to think it good fun, and laughed at the trouble they had given us, making us turn out so often in the middle of the night. We were employed also in making gabions and fascines* out of the brush-wood which grew near, and practised in throwing up trenches and fortifications.

Work we did not mind, fighting we were eager for, but we had an enemy against which it was hard to contend; that was the cholera. Officers and men were quickly struck down by it. The Guards alone lost nearly a hundred men. It was sad to hear the poor fellows' cries as the terrible cramp seized them. All the troops suffered more or less from sickness—the French more than all. We were thankful when the order came for us to embark once more for the spot where we hoped to meet the enemy. Yet many a strong man was so weakened

* Gabions are like large round hampers, without top or bottom, to be filled with earth. Fascines are like long, tight fagots.

by illness that he could scarcely march to the shore. We got on board our transport on the 1st of September and remained thirteen days, hoping to get rid of the dreadful plague which had attacked us. We lost, however, three and sometimes four men each day. Fastened up in their blankets they were sunk overboard. Some, however, floated to the surface, and it was no easy matter to get them down again. It was sad work, and damped the spirits of many. That big fleet, with more than 60,000 men on board, was a fine sight, though, as on the 14th of September we anchored off Old Fort on the coast of the Crimea. The order was joyfully received to land immediately. On all sides were the big transports, the largest East Indiamen, and the men-of-war, and numbers of steamers, all in regular order, each with their proper flags. We of the light division had ours blue and white chequered.

No. 1 company of the 23rd Welsh Fusiliers were the first on shore on a sandy beach. We landed soon after. Sentinels were marched off at once by companies and thrown out in a direct line from the sea far into the country. Parties with rifles loaded, and eager for the honour, as we called it, of firing the first shot at the Russians, were despatched in search of wood and water. Towards the evening it came on to rain very hard, and we had no tents or covering of any sort. We of the light division were pushed on inland, to give space for the other troops to form as they landed. Our orders, issued by Sir Colin Campbell, were to remain quiet, and, above all

things, to keep our rifles and ammunition dry. At about eleven at night a shot was fired by one of the enemy's sentinels, which whistled close to us. "Stand to your arms," was the cry, "the Russians are upon us." At the same time our whole line of sentinels opened a brisk fire on, it was supposed, the advancing enemy.

What cared we then for the rain and cold! The moment we had been looking for had arrived. The whole force which had as yet landed stood under arms, and thus we were kept till it was found that the surprise had been caused by a patrol of Cossacks, who had come upon us unawares. Wet and chilled as we were the hours passed slowly by, though we kept up our spirits pretty well. So passed our first night of campaigning. The next morning a few companies were marched down to the beach, to assist in landing our tents, and the ammunition, artillery, and stores, the artillerymen laughing at us, and hoping that we had passed a pleasant time on shore. By the night we got our tents pitched, and hoped to have a quiet rest, but the little gnat-like Cossacks were again buzzing about us, and were off before we could get a shot at them. The next four days were passed in landing stores, while the commissariat officers were collecting provisions from the country around, and which the peasants were very ready to supply.

Late on the 19th the light division was attacked by a mounted battery of artillery. The infantry was brought to the halt, and the artillery called to the

front, with the whole of the cavalry, about a thousand men, who were opposed by 2000 Cossacks. Shortly afterwards a gun carriage was seen coming to the rear with a poor fellow on it, his leg broken and thigh fractured. Several men on both sides were knocked over by the shot. That was the beginning of our campaign. After this Lord Raglan forbade any farther advance.

We remained where we halted all that night, our tents being left in the rear. Each man unrolled his blanket and great-coat to make the best of it he could. We were tired, hungry, and thirsty, but at last the ration rum was served out, and a half a bullock distributed to each company to be divided into messes, and cooked ready for next day, as it was expected that we should have a long march and a brush with the enemy. Many a fine fellow slept his last sleep on earth that night, and many a strong man before the next sun set was to be a helpless cripple. A soldier, above all men, may be thankful that he does not know what is before him.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DAY OF BATTLE.

It was still dark on the morning of that 20th day of September, 1854. The whole army of the allies lay stretched on the damp ground. Three hours after midnight the cry was heard, "Stand to your arms." We rose to our feet, every two comrades wringing

their wet blankets, and placing them on their knapsacks. We then fell in, and waited till daylight, when we were ordered to pile arms and fall out, but not to go more than a hundred yards from our regiments, as we might be required at a moment's notice to march to the front.

The sun rose brightly, without a cloud in the sky, and at seven o'clock the whole army advanced. The Turks were on the right, next the sea, then the French, next the British second division, followed by the third, and on their left the light division, followed by the first and fourth. On the left of all marched the cavalry. The artillery of each division was on its left. Baggage and ammunition trains kept close behind. The whole country was open, with rise beyond rise, till at length, after marching for two hours, we reached a rise, when we saw before us what was ere long to be the scene of a bloody battle. The ground sloped gently down to the river Alma, which ran directly in front of us, its banks covered with villages and orchards and gardens. It was fordable in most places. On the other side a range of hills, three and four hundred feet high, rose suddenly up from it; on our right, too steep to be climbed; but in front of where we of the light division stood, showing more gradual slopes. On these slopes, earthworks had been thrown up by the Russians. On the top of all, the ground was level; and it was here and on the slopes that the Russians were posted between us and Sebastopol. We had to storm those heights, and to drive the enemy off the level

ground on their top, in the face of the heavy artillery and the dense masses of infantry with which they were lined, not forgetting the strong reserve in the rear. We could see the French on the right beginning the action, climbing up the heights, and firing as they advanced ; then a strong force of Russians, who were nearly taken by surprise, moved to meet them. With Rifles and skirmishers in front, fighting with the Russian riflemen, the second division of the British then advanced in line. Up the hill they went, right at the enemy. The firing became general along the whole line. A village burst into flames below us. We, with other Highland regiments and the Guards, were formed in line,—a band, I may say, able to meet any enemy in the world in a hand-to-hand fight or charge of bayonets ; but the enemy's round-shot and bullets came rattling among us, and picked off many a stout fellow. We were therefore ordered to lie down to avoid the shot, our men grumbling not a little, and asking why we were not led at once against the enemy. We soon saw the reason why. Many young soldiers who had before talked of fighting as good fun, now changed their note, and found what terrible bloody work it is.

At last came the welcome order to advance. To show how cool some men are, even at that moment one of my comrades composed some verses, which he repeated to those near him. We sprang to our feet ; down the steep we dashed, through orchards of apples and grapes and other fruit. Several of our fellows, stopping to pick the fruit to quench their

thirst, were shot dead. We passed quickly across the Alma, which in some places we found so shallow that many of us scarcely wetted our feet. Once more we were ordered to take shelter behind a long stone wall. Then came the welcome order, "Up, Guards and Highlanders, and at them."

Up the hill we went, halting but for a moment, to allow the somewhat broken regiments which had hitherto been engaged, to pass between our ranks, and then right at the enemy we dashed, firing as we advanced, and prepared to charge, if he would have stood for us. As we reached the summit, a grand sight met our eyes,—the whole army of Russians spread out on the plain before us; but as we got nearer, we saw their backs instead of their faces; for they had already had a sufficient taste of our quality, and were in full retreat. Now and then they turned and fired, and my right and left-hand men were both killed in that manner. I had marked the Russian who had killed the last; and, dropping on my knee at the moment the bugle sounded cease firing, I took a steady aim, and stopped him from boasting that he had killed an Englishman.

We were much disappointed at not being allowed to follow the enemy. Still it was a glorious moment when we found that we had won a great victory, as we cheered and cheered again, and comrades grasped each other's hands, and congratulated ourselves on what we had done. To show what strict discipline is kept up in the army, at this moment I found myself placed under arrest for having fired after the

order to cease firing had sounded. On the circumstance being reported to the commanding officer, he directed that I should be brought before him.

“Why did you fire?” he asked.

I told him.

“Then I only wish that every man in the army possessed the same spirit,” he answered. “Let him be released. And now let me tell you that I shall have the satisfaction of reporting your cool courage and steadiness before the enemy to the proper authorities.”

My comrades cheered lustily when they heard this decision.

The army remained on the heights we had won till nearly dark, when the regiments were ordered to the positions allotted to them for the night. After we had formed our bivouac, I was much pleased at being sent for by the officers, and complimented by them on the way I had behaved during the day. At last we were ordered to remain quiet, and fresh ammunition was served out to us. We then lay down to rest, but all ready for a surprise ; and rest we did on the bare ground, for we were well weary after our day's toil. The Russians, however, had had enough fighting for the present, and let us alone.

A little before daylight on the 21st, we fell in, and remained under arms for some time. On its being ascertained that the Russians had retreated to a distance, we were ordered to clean and examine our rifles, and then to pile them. Rations were then served out to us, and we ate them with no small

appetite, while waiting for orders. Sir Colin Campbell, soon after this, rode into our midst, and called his brigade of Highlanders to attention. His speech was short, but to the point. He congratulated us all on the success which had been gained the day before, and complimented all—officers and men—on the cool courage they had exhibited under trying circumstances. He reminded us that the fighting was not over, though we had gained a victory; but he was persuaded that we should continue to perform our duty as true soldiers to our queen and country.

“To-day and to-morrow the army must remain on the ground to remove the wounded and to bury the dead,” he added. “I regret to say that the dead are very numerous, especially among the Guards and Welsh Fusiliers. The wounded must at once be carried down to the shore; and remember, my lads, that a wounded Russian is no longer an enemy, but a fellow-sufferer with our own comrades, and must be treated as such.”

We listened with attention to our brave general's address. A kinder officer or a better soldier never lived.

Pickaxes and shovels were at once served out to some of us, while others were provided with stretchers to carry the wounded down to the beach. I belonged to the party who had to perform the saddest duty a soldier has to go through after a battle, that of burying the dead. Talk of glory, talk of the fun of fighting,—just let a man spend two days on a hard-fought field, as we had to do, and it will be

enough to take out of him all love of fighting for fighting's sake. It was an awful sight, to see the number of fine fellows who lay stretched on the ground, never more to move. I had no idea that so many of our own British had been killed. The most dreadful to look at were those who had been struck by round-shot, some with their bodies almost torn to pieces. One moment they had been full of life,



rushing on to the fight; the next there they lay, heaps of clay, their spirits far, far off. I could not help asking myself how it was that I was not in the place of one of them.

While some of the parties dug large holes in the ground, others collected the dead, and threw them in—it was no time for ceremony—thirty or forty in one hole; some fine young fellows, others dark- or grey-bearded men, their last fight over.

“Ah,” I thought, and I dare say others thought too, “if those who set men to fight—the emperors

and kings and governments—could but see this sad sight, may be they would stop to think, and try and make up their quarrels some other way.”

Hundreds and hundreds we buried during those two days, our comrades by themselves, the Russians in pits by themselves. We could tell how the fight had gone by the way in which the bodies lay. In one place the Russians had made a stand, and were piled up in heaps as the British again and again charged them. In other parts the round-shot had torn through whole ranks of men, cutting them down like corn before the reaper's sickle.

I afterwards marked the spot where the Highlanders had poured in their fire on the enemy, and made those who escaped our bullets turn and fly. It was my first battle-field; it was the first and last of many poor fellows. And I say again, it is a fearful thing to see God's image defaced as I there saw it in a thousand terrible ways.

CHAPTER V.

I HAVE heard it said that no army was ever driven from so strong a position as that from which we drove the Russians. We took a number of prisoners, and among other things, the Russian general's carriage, with his letters to the emperor, saying that we could not do just the very thing we did do,—drive him from that hill.

The next day the army marched inland, with

Sebastopol on our right, our generals wishing to get round to the other side of the town, where there was a good harbour for our ships called Balaclava. We marched on all day, seeing now and then a few Cossacks, who galloped off as we advanced. We bivouacked at night; that is to say, we slept on the ground as we best could, with only our cloaks and blankets round us. We had not much rest, for we were called to arms several times, it being thought that the enemy were on us. At last we heard the approach of cavalry. We sprang to our feet, and fell in ready for action, but it was only our own cavalry, which had been sent up to protect our flanks.

The next day we came suddenly on a large body of Russians as it seemed. They, however, did not stop for us, but made off, leaving a quantity of wagons full of provisions and ammunition. We blew up the powder, which we did not want, and helped ourselves to the provisions, which we did. My comrades and I got a quantity of meal to make cakes, and firewood as our share.

There was an old fort at Balaclava, on the top of a steep hill. It was defended very bravely by its old commander; but he soon found that he could not hold it, so he and his eighty men marched out and surrendered themselves prisoners of war. We thus gained a good harbour for ships. The part of the army to which I belonged, after remaining a few days at Balaclava, was marched to the front before Sebastopol. We were here employed in digging

trenches, and throwing up batteries, and getting our guns into position ; that is, into the batteries, pointed towards the town which we were about to attack. We were twenty-four hours on duty, and the same number off duty, when we could rest from our work. Very hard work it was. Thousands of us were employed in it. We had to cut a zigzag



road, as it were, deep into the ground, with a bank towards the town, so that the shot from the guns in the town could only strike across the road, and not along it.

We toiled away to get all our batteries ready as soon as possible. The French and we were ready at the same time, but the batteries were masked ; that is to say, the front was covered up so that the enemy could not see whether we were ready or not.

The sun rose in a bright sky on the morning of the 17th of October, and at half-past six o'clock, a

hundred and twenty of our guns—some of them the largest ever made, and which had as yet not fired a shot—began firing away as hard as they could. The Russians answered with as many guns of the same size, and thus there were nearly two hundred and fifty guns all firing away together. The noise was awful. We knocked over a good many of the enemy's guns, and they blew up a French magazine; by which a hundred men were killed in a moment. A good many of our men were killed. The smoke was so thick that the gunners could not even see the town at which they were firing.

The day after the guns opened, it was made known to us that ten volunteers from each regiment—good shots—were wanted to get as close up as possible to the town, and to shoot the Russian gunners whenever sight could be got of them.

I at once volunteered and was accepted. Having been paraded before the Duke of Cambridge, who told us what we were to do, we set off. Shot, shells, and bullets were whizzing and hissing by us as we made our way onwards.

We had not got far when one of our party was wounded. One of my comrades, Donald M'Kenzie, and I halted, dressed his wound as best we could, sent him back to the hospital, and then pushed on, creeping and running, and taking advantage of every bit of cover we could find. We thus got up to within a hundred yards of the Russian guns in a fort they called the Redan, and jumped into a pit which the enemy had themselves dug to shelter their own

riflemen, who came there at night to annoy our working parties. Here we were sheltered, and could pick off the Russian gunners without being seen. They soon, however, found us out, and sent doses of cannister and grape shot towards us, knocking the dust and stones about our heads. A grape shot hit the right hand of one of my comrades, and took off the forefinger. "Ah, my boys, I'll pay you off for that, and give you a warm one in return," he exclaimed, as he reloaded his rifle. He was as good as his word, and he picked off many a Russian who appeared in their batteries.

Our batteries had different names. One near us was the 21 Gun Battery. Red-hot shot were fired from it, and before long they blew up a Russian magazine. The men in the battery, mostly Jack Tars, seeing this, got up and cheered lustily; and even we who were in the pits so close to the enemy couldn't help doing the same. We had better have been silent, for the enemy sent a shower of rockets and grape shot among us as also at the battery. One of the rockets blew up an ammunition wagon, bringing powder into the battery. This made the Russians jump up and cheer, and as we picked off some of their men as they did so, they sent out a company of their sharpshooters to attack us. Our captain, seeing this, thought it prudent to retire. We therefore each of us took steady aim at a particular man, and in most cases knocking him over, jumped out of the pit and retired towards our camp.

The next day we returned to the same place by a

different road. It was not well chosen, and several of our men were wounded in going towards the pits. We held them for some hours, when the Russians, not liking the way we treated them, came against us in strong force. We of course had to jump out of our holes and retire, but they almost surrounded us as it was. Fortunately the force of riflemen on outpost duty saw our position, and advanced to our assistance. We then retired towards them, disputing every inch of the ground.

The Russians had now got into the pits we had left. Once more, therefore, we advanced to drive them out. They stood their ground, and we had a fierce hand-to-hand fight with them.

I found myself engaged with a fellow who fought more desperately than any of his comrades. Having discharged his musket, he rushed at me with his bayonet, a dig from which I had much difficulty in avoiding. Just then his helmet was knocked off, and I saw clearly the features of Shane M'Dermot. I cried out "Traitor, deserter, scoundrel, I know you! Yield!"

On hearing this he seemed as eager to escape as he was before to fight. Calling to his comrades in Russian, several of them sprang back with him. Others, however, stood their ground, and gave us shot for shot. I loaded, and fired at Shane. I thought that I had hit him, for he fell; but he was up again and retreating with his companions.

Meantime the rest of our party were actively engaged. Joseph Hartley, a corporal of my party,

showed a great deal of spirit. He jumped on to the top of the mound overlooking the pits, and firing rapidly, shot three Russians, one after the other, through their heads. A captain of the Guards jumped right down into the pit, and was wounded through both his wrists.

The Russians, however, at last took to flight, leaving three dead and many more wounded. We took their rifles and ammunition from them, and returned into camp, helping along the captain of Guards, whose wounds had been bound up by my comrade Donald M'Kenzie, who has before been mentioned.

We continued the same sort of work till the morning of the 25th of October; while the Duke of Cambridge was instructing us what to do, news was brought that the Russians were attacking Balaclava. We hastened to join our respective regiments, and found the Russians in great force attacking on all points. The Turks, who had charge of the outposts, had been driven in, and the 93rd Highlanders, under Sir Colin Campbell, were formed in line ready to receive the Russian cavalry as they advanced towards the hill. A steady volley, at two hundred yards, sent the Russians flying back, but, to the surprise of the Highlanders, not a man fell from the saddle, when it was found that they were all strapped on to their horses, so that the dead and wounded were carried out of the fight. The Enniskillens and Scots Greys dashed right on the flanks of the retreating cavalry, and cut them up terribly before they could get back to the Russian army, which

appeared with a strong force of artillery on the opposite side of the valley.

It was shortly after this that the light cavalry, through a mistaken order given by poor Captain Nolan, who was directly afterwards killed, charged across the valley at the enemy's guns, other guns playing on them from either side. If the French cavalry had not charged and helped them, not a man would have escaped; as it was, they were fearfully cut up, the greater number being killed or wounded. Still it was a sight to make a soldier's heart beat quick as with their helmets glittering and their swords flashing in the sunbeams, that gallant band dashed across the valley. But it was sad to watch those who did escape, coming back, many on foot, one wounded man between two others, some scarcely able to sit their horses, very few unhurt; and to think what a gallant band they had looked as they rode down the hill but a few minutes before.

We remained on the heights of Balaclava that night, prepared to receive the Russians if they had returned; but they had had enough of us, and had retreated. We of the light division remained stationed at this place all the winter.

There was another bloody battle fought not long after this on the 5th of November, called the battle of Inkerman. The allied armies were posted on high ground, with the sea on one side, and deep valleys on the other. Below the British right, where the ground was very steep, were the rivers Chernaya and Inkerman. The Russian general knew that this

was our weakest point, and evidently hoped to take us by surprise. The morning was so dark and foggy that the officers who were visiting the outposts could not see twenty yards before them into the valley. Sir Thomas Trowbridge was the first, I have heard, to discover the approach of the enemy. They were close upon our camp with 60,000 men, and were beginning to climb the heights before the bugle sound summoned our troops to stand to their arms. The British during the whole day had not more than 8,000 men engaged. The Russians climbed up the heights, but again and again were driven back, till the French, at last coming up, put them to flight. The Guards, who had a great deal of the fighting, behaved most bravely, and lost a great many officers and men. The British army on that morning had 43 officers and 416 men killed, and 101 officers and 1332 men wounded, while 200 were missing, mostly made prisoners.

A very severe winter now set in, and a large steamer *The Prince*, with clothing for the army, sank off Balaclava in a fearful gale, in which many other vessels were lost. The weather was very cold, with snow and wind and rain, and our poor fellows suffered greatly from want of food and clothing and shelter. Our tents were nearly worn out, and were at all events unfit for the winter, and we were obliged to live in hovels and holes in the ground. From what I have heard, many more men die of sickness in war time than are killed in battle; and from the numbers who died of cholera and other complaints, in the Crimea, I believe that to be true.

I have not said anything about Marshall for some time. He did his duty steadily and well, and was always cool under fire. He had not volunteered as I had done for any dangerous work, but he was a man on whom I knew that I could rely, whatever was to be done. He came one day to me in high spirits, with a letter he had received from Kathleen. She prayed that the war would soon be over. She said that her father had just had some money left him, and would, if he was willing, as soon as he returned home, purchase his discharge.

“It’s a kind, noble offer,” said Marshall; “I will accept it and return,—work for him as long as I live.”

I praised his intention, said that I wished I had the same chance, and wished him a long life and happiness with his pretty Kathleen. Soon after this my old comrade was made a corporal, and I received an honour I little expected. A general parade was ordered for the whole regiment, when a square being formed, in the centre of which the colonel with other officers were posted, several men were called up, I being one of them. He then presented us with a distinguished conduct medal, on which were the words, “For distinguished conduct in the field.” On giving me mine, he congratulated me and wished me long life to wear the decoration. He hoped, he said, that many other young men in the regiment would follow my example, and he could assure them that if they did, the same rewards were in store for them. The captains of companies were then ordered to march their respective companies to their private

parades, when my captain wished me long life and happiness, and my comrades were so pleased that they lifted me up, and carried me to my hut, and the medal went the rounds of the whole company.

“Well done, Jack; I’m glad you’ve got that. You’ve earned it, that you have, my boy,” was the sort of remark made to me by my comrades, one after the other. Marshall also was commended for his bravery and coolness.

“Ah Jack, I’ll do something to try and gain that, to carry home to her;” he said to me as he gave the medal back into my hands.

That dreadful winter passed away at last. I do not think that British troops ever went through greater trials than did the British army in the Crimea, and never did men submit more patiently, or more nobly do their duty. There is one thing to be said, our officers set us the example. They suffered as much as we did, and never complained. We could not help ourselves; but many of them we knew well were gentlemen of good property, who could have enjoyed life at home, in ease and comfort; and instead of that they stayed out with us at the call of duty, went through the hardships and risked their lives as we did, who had nothing to lose and everything to gain. One young baronet, with many thousand pounds a year, was killed at the battle of the Alma, and his brother who succeeded him fell directly afterwards. Both commissioned and non-commissioned officers and men performed many gallant deeds. Several, when their comrades were wounded, dashed

forward, and though the shot, shells, and bullets of the enemy were flying about their heads, lifted them up in their arms or on their backs and took them out of the fight. The Honourable Major Clifford in this way carried off one of his men who had fallen close to him, from among the enemy; so did Sergeant Moynihan, who is now a captain. On the 8th September, Sergeant Moynihan was the first to enter the Redan. One of his officers, Lieutenant Smith, having been killed, he made a gallant attempt to rescue his body, and after being twice bayoneted was made prisoner, but rescued by the advance of the British. John Alexander, a private of the 19th regiment, brought in Captain Buckley and several men after the attack on the Redan. At the battle of Inkerman, Private Beach, seeing Lieutenant-Colonel Carpenter lying on the ground, and several Russians advancing towards him, dashed forward, killed two of them, and protected the colonel against his assailants, till a party of the 41st regiment coming up put them to flight. Private McDermot, also at Inkerman, saved the life of Colonel Haly, much in the same way. However, I could fill pages with accounts of the brave deeds done by our men during the war. Many young sergeants not only gained the Victoria Cross, but had their commissions given them, and are now captains and adjutants of their respective regiments. A man, to gain this rank, however, must be steady and sober, have a thorough knowledge of his duty, be brave and cool, and a good scholar.

However I must go back to my tale. We remained at Balaclava till June, when we were ordered to the front to take part in a proposed attack on the fortress. The French were to attack the Malakoff battery, and we, under Sir George Brown, the Redan; while another force under General Eyre, was to threaten the works about the dockyard creek.

The French began the attack before daybreak, and before long the order was given for us to advance. We could not hold the Redan till the French had taken the Malakoff. We advanced rather too soon. We were met by a tremendous fire, and Sir John Campbell who, calling to the troops to follow, led the way over the parapet right up to the enemy's guns, was shot dead with many other officers and men. Other officers with small parties of men would dash forward, waving their swords, only to meet the same fate.

"Come, boys," cried Marshall, who had been for some time under the shelter of the parapet, "I'm resolved to gain my promotion to-day; who'll follow? We'll take those guns."

Nearly twenty men sprang out with him and rushed forward. Poor fellows, they were met as the others had been by an iron shower, which left not one unhurt. Only three got back, and Marshall was not among them. I would have tried to bring him off, but the others said he was among the first killed. However, I resolved to go and look for him as soon as I could, without the certainty of losing my own life, as I should have done had I gone then.

It was sad to think that so many brave men should

have lost their lives to no purpose. A truce was arranged for a few hours that both sides might bury their dead. The instant the white flag was hoisted on the fortifications of Sebastopol, I hurried towards the Redan to look for Marshall, before any of the burying parties should find his body if he was killed. I had some slight hopes that he might still be alive, though unable to move on account of his wounds. It was sad to see the number of the bravest of our men who had fallen under the Redan. The whole way up to the guns was strewn with bodies, and as I got nearer to the guns, there were many corpses of Russians, who had attacked the British as they were retiring. I looked eagerly about. There lay poor Marshall. I took his hand. He would never grasp rifle again. Near him lay a Russian soldier, whose bayonet, it seemed clear to me, had pierced his breast, and who himself had been shot at the same moment by Marshall's rifle, for the weapons lay crossed on the ground as they had fallen from the grasp of the dying men. The Russian soldier had rolled over on his side. I turned him round. Though his face was begrimed with dust and smoke, I at once knew his features. They were those of Shane McDermot. He had at length met the fate he deserved—too good for him, many will say, but he had also been allowed to kill in revenge as honest and brave and simple-hearted a soldier as ever fought for his Queen and country. I felt inclined to kick the body of the seeming Russian, but I did not. I saw at once that such would not be a worthy or a Christian act. “He

is in the hands of One who knows how to reward and punish," I thought to myself; and leaving the dead body of my enemy where it lay, I lifted that of my friend on my shoulders, and bore it away towards our lines. I was resolved that it should rest in British ground. Several persons asked why I was taking so much trouble with a dead body.

"He was his comrade and friend, poor fellow!" I heard one or two say.

I carried him to a quiet spot, and there I dug a grave as deep as I could, and hunted about till I found a stone, which I placed at his head. I should say that before I placed my old comrade in his grave, I searched his pockets that I might send anything I could find in them home. Among them was a pocket-book, and in it was a letter he had written the night before to Kathleen. He told her how he hoped to win fame and a name, and might be win his commission, and make her a lady as she deserved to be. Poor fellow! his ambition, which till then had been asleep, was aroused. How soon was it, with all his earthly hopes, cut short! Such has been many another young soldier's fate. We lost that day alone, 22 officers and 230 men killed, and 71 officers and upwards of 1000 men wounded. Altogether it was about the saddest of the whole war.

CHAPTER VI.

We worked on, making our zigzag approaches, night after night getting nearer to the city. Often during

the time I used to go and visit poor Marshall's grave, and I own that I dropped many a tear over it, as I thought of his worth, and the grief the news of his death would cause to poor Kathleen's heart. That would not be dried up so soon as my sorrow. His fate might be mine any day, and I had plenty of things to think about. The poor girl would mourn alone. One day I was thus standing near the grave, when I heard a boy's voice say, "Sure that's yourself, Mr. Armstrong."

I looked up, and before me I saw a young drummer-boy, in the uniform of the 57th regiment.

"Yes, my lad ; and who are you ?" I asked, not recollecting the features.

"Pat Nolan ; sure and it's many a day I've been looking for you," answered the lad. "I've come out to see the war, and it's enough I've seen of it anyhow."

I was glad to see poor little Pat. The world had gone ill with him and his family, and an elder brother having enlisted, he also had done so as a drummer-boy. His brother had been killed, and he was, as it were, left alone in the world. I promised to befriend him as far as I could, poor boy. I had no doubt that the men of his regiment would look after him and treat him kindly.

A few nights after this I was in the trenches, when I saw a shell coming directly towards our position. I cried out at the very top of my voice, "Close cover," that the men might get close under the embankment of the trench. Some followed my advice,

but others stood still, when the shell exploded in the midst of us, wounding twelve of our number, some very severely, and, in addition, a captain of my regiment. I saw him fall, and thought that he was killed. I ran to him and found that he breathed, so I went and brought a stretcher from the end of another trench, and placed him on it. He begged to be allowed to die in peace, as he was mortally wounded, but another man and myself undertook to carry him to the hospital, at the Twenty-one Gun Battery. The shortest way was across the open space between the trenches. As there were fully a hundred shells and rockets in the air at once, there was plenty of light for us to see our way. We agreed to run the risk of being shot, and to carry him across, as it was important to have him looked to at once. We reached the battery without being hit, but our poor captain died within a quarter of an hour of entering the hospital. We afterwards carried his body to his quarters, where his brother officers, when they heard of what had happened, soon came to take a last look at one they all loved so well.

The day was coming on, as we well knew by the advance in our trenches, when another attack on the fortress was to be made. The Russians had kept us fully employed, and during July and August several times came out from behind their lines to attack us, and were as often driven back. There is one matter I forgot to talk of. All this time it was pleasant to know that we were thought of by the people at home. Comforts of every sort were sent out to the soldiers—

food, and clothes, and books ; and missionaries and other ministers of religion came out and preached to those in health, and comforted the sick and dying ; but besides this, hospitals were established in the more healthy parts of the country belonging to our allies, the Turks, to which our sick and wounded were sent. What also won the hearts of our wounded men was the gentle care with which they were tended, not by hired nurses, but by many ladies who came out from England on purpose to assist them. Those who had been cured, and came back to the Crimea, told how they had been treated ; and I do not believe that there is a soldier of that army but who blesses the ladies of England for the sake of those who acted as nurses in the military hospitals in the East.

On the 5th of September the whole of our batteries again opened on the town, and went on firing night and day, till, on the 8th at noon, the French, who were to attack the Malakoff, made the signal to advance. They rushed on, as they always do, very quickly ; and before the Russians, who were at dinner, had time to defend the place, they were in it, and their flag was flying on the ramparts. Now came the turn of the British, who had to attack the Redan. On they went ; but the Russians were ready for them, and they were met by a hot fire of musketry and artillery. Major Welsford, of the 97th, who led the storming party, was killed, and Colonel Handcock was mortally wounded. There was not a hotter fight during the whole war. We had 29

officers and 356 non-commissioned officers and men killed, and not far from 2000 wounded; and, after all, our men were compelled to retire. It was known that the Highland brigade, under Sir Colin Campbell were to renew the attack the next morning. We made up our minds that it would be a day of bloodshed, but we hoped also of victory, and we were prepared for it.

In the night, however, an officer, with some men, went out to look for a friend who had fallen in the works of the Redan. Not seeing him, he went on and found no sign of an enemy. This being told to the engineer officer conducting the works, he sent a corporal of sappers, who also found all still within. Sir Colin, on hearing of the matter, called for ten volunteers from each of the Scotch regiments to learn the truth. They, advancing at a run, crossed the ditch, and a man of the 93rd was the first to scale the rampart. The place was deserted. The Russians, on a bridge of boats and rafts, had crossed over to the other side of the harbour during the night, having set the town on fire in all parts. We took possession of a city of blazing houses and exploding mines. It was some time before we could move about, for fear of being blown up or crushed by falling houses. The whole city was a ruin, and the Russians had also sunk or burnt all the ships in the harbour, so that it seemed that they had left us little worth having.

Then came the sad work of burying those who had fallen in the assault on the Redan, as also those who

had defended it. The Russians were placed by themselves, at one end of the ditch, and our men at the other, and then we shovelled the earth from the slope over them both. There they lie; the rampart of the fortress the one had fought to defend, the other to gain, their monument. The most terrible sight, however, was in a building which we did not enter for two days, I think, on account of the houses burning round it and the mines exploding. It was a hospital; and in it were two thousand human bodies, and out of the whole scarcely five hundred were alive. The rest had died. For forty-eight hours no one had been near them to give them a drop of water, or dress their aching wounds. I've often thought what those poor fellows must have gone through. Then we had to carry them out, and bury them. It was sickening, terrible work. Those at home little know what a soldier has to go through. It is not all gold and glitter, let me tell them, marching here and there on a fine day, with the sun shining, and band playing, and colours flying.

I am not one of those who would tell a young fellow not to go for a soldier. Very far from that; but I wish to let him know that he will have a great deal of hard, trying work to go through, and he will have to face death in all sorts of ways. Still the man who has a fancy for soldiering, and is steady, is sure to get on, and will find it a good profession on the whole.

After we entered Sebastopol, the war was over, but it was some time before peace was proclaimed. We

were heartily glad when that time came ; for we were getting very sick of the place where we had lost so many of our comrades and friends. We sailed back as we had come, in a number of large transports ; and thankful we were to see the shores of Old England again.

I went out soon afterwards with our regiment to India. That is a large country, a long way off, on the other side of the world nearly ; the greater part is very hot, and the natives are of a dark-brown colour. They are mostly heathens, and worship all sorts of ugly idols of wood and stone, but some are of the same religion as the Turks, and believe in the false prophet, Mahomet. The East India Company had a large army of these men, with English officers, but native non-commissioned officers. These native officers, with some of their chiefs, thought that they could take the country from the English. They pretended therefore that the English government were going to make them turn Christians by force, and persuaded the men to revolt. They kept this secret, and on a sudden the greater number of the native regiments rose against their English officers, murdered many of them, as well as many civilians, with their wives and children, and took possession of several fortified places. The most important were Delhi and Lucknow. In one place, Cawnpore, a chief, called Nana Sahib, got General Wheeler and all the English in the garrison into his power, and murdered nearly the whole of them, soldiers and civilians, women and children ; the bodies of the

latter he threw into a deep well. Three persons alone out of one thousand escaped that dreadful massacre. The accounts of these things made the hearts of British soldiers burn within them. We had a number of native troops from other parts of the country who remained faithful to the British, but still the rebel regiments far outnumbered the English troops. We found ourselves once more under the command of our old general, Sir Colin Campbell. We marched from Calcutta to Cawnpore, from which the wretch, Nana Sahib, had taken flight, and then on to Lucknow, which the rebels still held in great force. We lost a great many men by cholera, and had frequent skirmishes and one or two pitched battles with the enemy—till early in March, 1858, we were before Lucknow. Here we had some severe fighting. We had to storm one large building after another, but at length the rebels were driven out, and numbers cut to pieces. On one occasion I had to climb a tree to see what the enemy were about on the other side of a wall; though hundreds of bullets whistled by me I descended unhurt, but was soon afterwards hit on the breast with a bullet which knocked me over; I was up again, and refusing to go to the rear, assisted to capture a fort, and spiked a gun with my bayonet. While doing this, my kilt was riddled with bullets, though I escaped unhurt. I was not so fortunate a day or two afterwards, when attacking a large block of palaces full of Sepoys, for I received a shot in my neck which laid me low. I was carried out of the fight by my comrades, and my

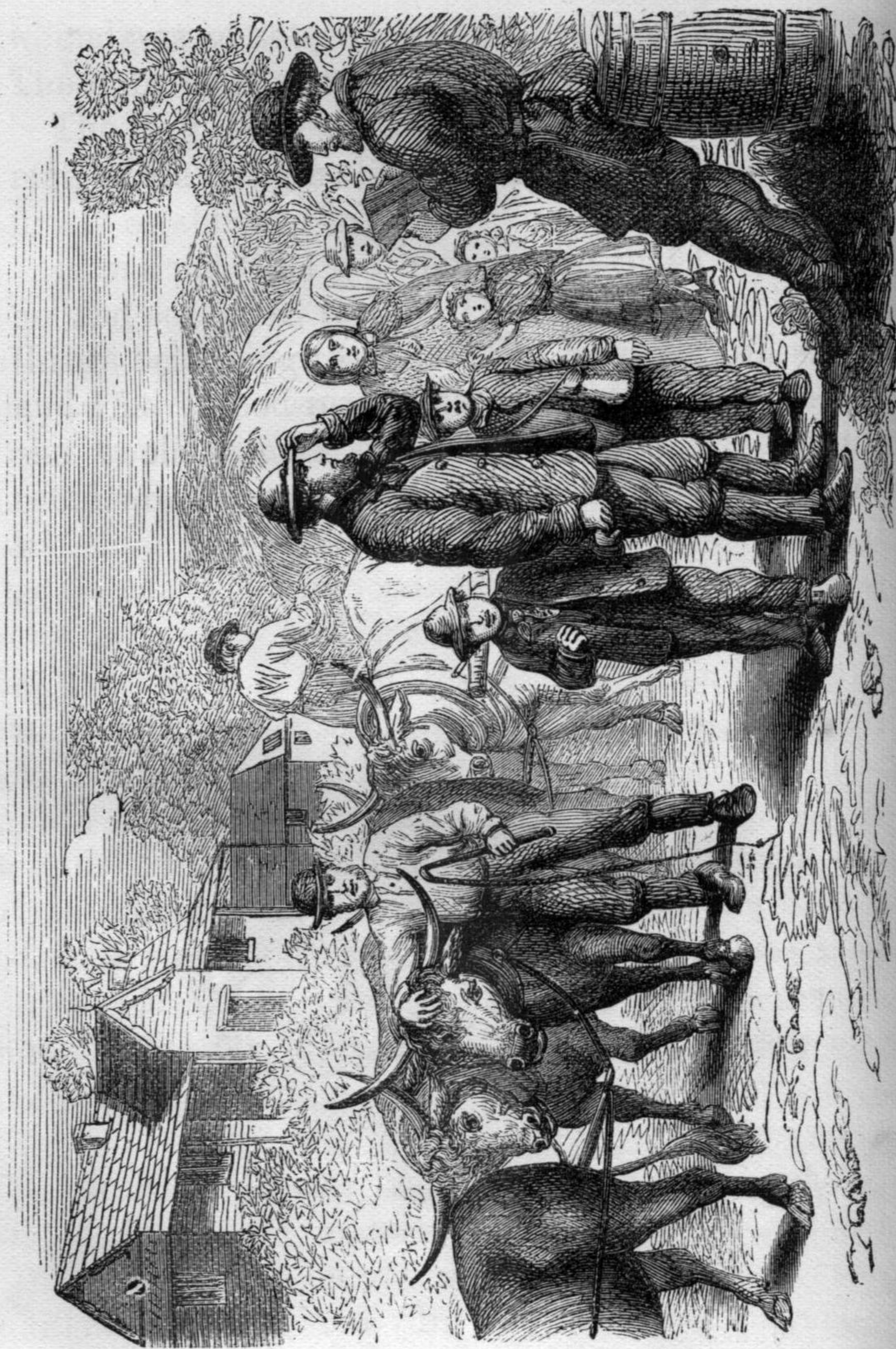
wound was so severe that I had to be invalided home. The fight before Lucknow was my last battle.

The English beat the Sepoys wherever they were met, and at length the British rule was once more firmly established in India.

It was not till I got home again that I was able to go and see poor Kathleen, and to give her the few things belonging to Marshall. She was still single; and I have good reason to think that for his sake she would remain so. Such as I have described them, are some of the common events of a soldier's life.



OFFICERS VISITING OUTPOSTS.



JOSEPH RUDGE, THE AUSTRALIAN SHEPHERD.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN God formed the round world we live on, He made some parts very unlike other parts. The climate, the trees and plants, and the animals of some countries altogether differ from those of other countries. If we could go right through the globe just as a darning needle is run through a ball of worsted, we should come out close to a country ten times as large as England, which belongs to our Queen, and is called Australia. To get to it, however, we have really to sail round about over the sea, and the voyage takes about three months. When it is winter in England, it is summer there. The trees do not shed their leaves, and many of the animals carry their young about in bags before them, and like the kangaroo, have long hind legs with which they spring over the ground. It is a fine country for cattle and horses, and still more so for sheep, the wool of which is very fine.

About three hundred miles from the sea, up the country, and towards the end of December, a few years back, a busy scene was to be witnessed.

The country was not hilly nor flat, but swelling with ups and downs. On one side was a forest, but the trees were wide enough apart to let horsemen

gallop between them. Other trees of odd twisted shapes, but large, with the bark often torn off from the stems, were scattered about here and there. Still most of the country was open and covered with grass, long leaved and scanty, very unlike that of meadow land in England, but still affording good feed for sheep. A creek ran out from the forest with a stream of water, which filled a small lake or water hole. On the higher ground stood a house of one floor, with a verandah round it, a large wool-shed, a stable, three or four smaller cottages, or rather huts, and other outhouses. There was a small garden enclosed, but no other signs of cultivation. There were numerous sheepfolds and two cattle pens, but the rest of the country round was quite open. It was the head sheep station of Moneroo, owned by Mr. Ramsay, who managed it himself.

It was well managed, too, for the watchful eye of a master who understood the work to be done was everywhere. The sheep-pens were full, and there were a number of men moving about. Some were down at the creek up to their knees in water, busy washing the sheep, which were driven down to them. A still larger number were near the wool-shed, with long shears in their hands taking the soft snowy fleeces off the creatures' backs. One flock was seen coming in from a distant out-station, following the careful shepherd, who, like those we read of in the Holy Land, had taught his flock to know his voice. Another flock, having been shorn, was moving off to its usual run.

Towards evening, a dray laden with stores was seen, its wheels and bullocks' hoofs as it drew near the station stirring up the dry earth into clouds of dust. It brought casks of flour, and pork, and hogs-heads of sugar, and boxes of tea, and cheeses, and all sorts of cooking and mess things, and saddles, and harness, and ropes, and tobacco, and cattle medicines ; indeed, it would be hard to say what it did not bring. By the side of it, besides the usual driver and his mate, strode a sturdy, fresh-looking Englishman, whose cheeks had not yet been burnt by the hot sun of Australia, and two young boys ; while on the top of the dray sat his wife—a comely looking woman—a girl of thirteen, and three smaller children. Dick Boyce, the bullock driver, pointed out the master to the new chum he had brought up from the chief port of the colony. The latter stepped forward at once, with one of his boys, while the other stayed with his mother, whom Boyce and his mate, Tom Wells, helped to dismount. The new comer gave a letter to Mr. Ramsay, and he and his sons stood watching his face while the master read it.

“Very good,” said Mr. Ramsay, as he folded up the letter, “your name I see is Joseph Rudge, and you have brought your wife and children.”

“Yes, sir ; that is my good woman out there by the dray, and this is our eldest boy, Sam,” answered Joseph, touching the arm of one of the stout, fine-looking lads by his side with a look of honest pride.

Mr. Ramsay smiled, and asked, “Where do you come from ?”

“Wiltshire, sir,” answered Joseph.

“You understand sheep?” said Mr. Ramsay.

“Been accustomed to them all my life,” said Joseph.

“How many do you think you could shear in a day?” asked the master.

“May be three score,” answered Rudge, looking with an eye somewhat of contempt at the small breed of sheep he saw before him. “At a pinch, I’d say fourscore, sir; but I don’t think a man could do more than that properly, from what I know, and from what I’ve heard.

“You’ll do, my man,” said Mr. Ramsay, looking well pleased, “make my interest yours, and yours shall be mine. Mr. Thompson, my agent at Melbourne, tells me that he has engaged you and your family for fifty pounds a year, and all found. Your eldest lads will soon learn how to make themselves useful, and so will that lassie there, while your wife will keep your hut when you are out with the sheep. You will stay here for a few weeks to learn our ways, and then I will send you up in charge of an out-station. To-morrow you will begin work, for we have plenty for you to do.”

“Thank ye, sir; I’ll do my best to serve you, and so will my wife and children,” answered Joseph, in a hearty voice which showed that he purposed to do what he said.

Joseph and his family were at once placed in possession of a vacant hut. It was a rough-looking place, but served well for that fine climate. The

frame was of wood, with slab walls, and was roofed with sheets of bark from a tree called the "stringy-bark tree." It was divided into two parts. The bedsteads were rough frames with hides stretched on them, but there were good beds and pillows stuffed with short wool, of which no one could complain. A table, and some stools and benches, with a cupboard and plenty of shelves and hooks was all the furniture they found in the hut. Joseph and Sam went off to the storekeeper, to get their rations, and came back with a fine supply of everything they wanted.

That evening, as Joseph Rudge and his family sat round the table at supper, he thanked God heartily for having brought them into a good country, and placed them in the hands of a kind and just master. This was the character Dick Boyce and his mate had given of Mr. Ramsay, as they travelled up with the dray from Melbourne.

The next day, Joseph set to work with his shears, with Sam to help him. He did not shear so many sheep as the contract shearers, but he sheared well, leaving none of the bottom wool, and his employer was perfectly satisfied. He got through two score the first day; two and a half the next; and three the next. He observed one man who sheared no less than six score in one day, but Joseph on his way home to dinner observed that much of the bottom wool—the most valuable in a fleece—remained on the sheeps' backs. He told Tom Wells what he had seen, and Tom told Boyce, and soon afterwards

Mr. Ramsay went to the pens in which the sheep were placed, and sent for the fast shearer, John Butt. John was very angry, but Mr. Ramsay was firm, and refused to fulfil his part of the contract unless he sheared the sheep properly.

“I’ll pay the fellow off who brought the matter before the master’s eyes,” growled John Butt. “It’s that new chum ; I saw him looking at the sheep. What business has he to come and interfere with our ways ?”

Joseph Rudge had thus made an enemy though he did not know it. Even had he known what would happen, he would have done the same, for he was one of those who follow the golden rule, “Do right, whatever you think may come of it, and leave that to be settled by God.”

The first thing done with the fleece, when off the sheep’s back, was to clean it on the folding table, which was a framework through which the dirt fell. After that it was put into the press and packed tightly into large bales fit for sending on board the ship which was to carry it to England. As soon as all the wool was done up into bales, it was packed on the drays to be sent off to the port to be shipped. Each dray carried about twenty bales, and was drawn by ten stout oxen. The drays were low, like those of brewers, had no sides, but upright pins to keep in the bales, those at the corners being of iron. The bales were secured by ropes, with a tarpaulin to be thrown over them in case of wet. Dick Boyce and Tom Wells had to set off again at once. Sam wanted

very much to go with them. He had a fancy for the life they led, as many a boy would have, but his father could not spare him. They travelled about fifteen miles each day, and carried everything they wanted on the road. At night, tarpaulins were let down at the sides and ends of the dray. This formed as much shelter as they required when sleeping. The bullocks were turned loose to pick up their food; and while Boyce went to bring them in, Wells lighted the fire, cooked their breakfast, and made the dray ready for starting. From stations far up the country, drays are two months and more on the journey to the sea. The chief drawback to this life is, that people long accustomed to it do not take readily to any other, and this made Joseph not wish that Sam should follow it.

CHAPTER II.

JOSEPH RUDGE and his family had for some time been living in the new hut, about twenty miles from the head station. He had plenty of hard work too; for Mr. Ramsay owned cattle as well as sheep, and he had agreed to take charge of a herd, as well as his flock, with the help of his sons and a mate who had been sent with him. Labour was very scarce just then; indeed, it often is in Australia, and a few hands were obliged to do the work of many. News had just before come to the station that gold had been found in several places, and that a pocket full could be had by digging a little, and oftentimes by looking

for it among the rocks. Many people going off to the gold diggings had asked him to go with them.

“No,” he answered, “I came out here to look after sheep and oxen, and I understand that work, I have a good master and fair wages, and I’ll not desert my master, or change my work.”

“Right, Jos,” said Mat Clark, his mate; “I never knew any good come to any one by doing wrong, and we should be doing wrong if we were to leave Mr. Ramsay to take care of his sheep and cattle all by himself. It’s not the way we should like to be served.”

Mat had come out to the colony very many years before; how he never said. He was now an old man. Some people called him Silly Mat. He used to answer, “May be I’m silly enough to try and do what is right, and to be sorry for having done what was wrong. I hope to be silly in this wise to the end of my days.”

Joseph and his family lived a somewhat solitary life, but as they had plenty to do, they did not mind that for themselves, only they knew it was bad for the children to get no education, and they could never visit any place of worship. For weeks together they saw no one except Mat and the keeper of another station about seven miles off, known as Tony Peach. Tony was not a man they liked at all, though they could not exactly tell why. He would put on very soft manners though, and seemed to have taken a great fancy to Joseph and his family. He had lost an arm as a soldier, he said, and he could not manage

a spade or pick, or he owned that he would have been off to the diggings. He grumbled much indeed, at not being able to go, for if there was one thing he loved on earth, it was money, and he thought that it would be very pleasant to dig up gold as people do potatoes. He thought, however, that he had found out a way of growing rich without much trouble.

Joseph had just come in one afternoon with his flock and folded them, it was then Sam's duty to watch them for the night. For this he had a sort of box on legs, with a hole in the side, into which he could creep and sleep comfortably. The dogs were fastened up at different points round the fold, that should a dingo, or native dog, a sort of fox, come near, their barking might at once arouse him. Joseph was just sitting down to his supper of a dish of stewed mutton and damper, that is wheaten unleavened bread, baked under the ashes, washed down by a few cups of good tea, when Tony Peach rode up. A fresh damper and a bowl of tea was placed before him. He talked on general matters for some time, and he then spoke of what he called the rights of servants. After a little time he began to speak about a plan by which, if Joseph would join him, they should make a good thing, and no one be the worse or the wiser. Tony proposed forming a herd of cattle of their own in a back run. They were to put a brand on the animals of J. B., and John Butt was to stand as the owner.

“That is to say, you want me to join you in rob-

bing our good master," said Joseph, fixing his eyes on Tony.

"Call it what you like," answered Tony, "a few beasts out of the herd won't be missed every now and then, and we shall get them."

"No, I'll have nothing to do with the matter," said Joseph stoutly, "it's robbery, call it what you will; and what is more, Peach, if I thought that you were about such a thing, I'd let Mr. Ramsay know, as it would be my duty to do. I warn you."

Peach was very angry, for he had already begun the business, and wanted a mate to help him. He tried to hide his anger, though he made up his mind to be revenged.

"Well, mate, don't say anything about it. If you don't think it should be, we'll let it alone, and no harm will have been done."

Joseph was not satisfied. He made up his mind to keep a good look out on the cattle under his charge.

After Peach was gone, he went in to ask old Mat what he thought about the man.

"What has he been saying to you?" asked Mat, looking up from his bed, for he had already turned in. "No good, I'll warrant."

Joseph told him.

"That's just what he said to me some time back; but he found that he would gain nothing, so he's let me alone since."

Joseph said that he hoped he would gain nothing from him either.

“Never let him gain an inch, mate, or he’ll soon gain an ell,” said old Mat. “He is doing Satan’s work, and that’s what Satan is always trying to do—trying to make us do a little wrong—just to get in the sharp edge of the wedge; he knows that he shall soon be able to drive it home.”

This talk with old Mat, made Joseph still more determined to have nothing to do with Peach, however friendly he might seem. Joseph was glad to think that Mr. Ramsay had settled to muster his stock in a few days, because he should know then better how many he had under his charge, and put a stop to Peach’s tricks.

Mr. Ramsay and several companions arrived at the station the night before, all well mounted, for the work they had to do required good horses. Among them was a Mr. Harlow, who owned the next run, and lived about fifteen miles off. He was unmarried, and had two sisters and an old lady, their aunt, living with them. They were very kind people, Joseph heard. Sam, and even Bobby, his second boy had now become very good horsemen, and would gallop after and bring back stray cattle as well as many men. Still their mother had not yet quite got over the fear she had of seeing them, especially Bobby, gallop off into the wild country, on the backs of high horses, all by themselves.

At break of day, a dozen or more horsemen started off, dividing, so as to get round the pasture. Each had a stock-whip in his hand: the handle is but a foot long, but the lash is about fifteen. A loud

cracking sound can be made with it, and its lash strikes through the thickest skin. The cattle, when roused, as is usual, made for the low ground, where Joseph and his sons, with one or two other men, were ready to collect them. They, however, were very wild, as they will soon get when there are not enough men to look after them. Now a dozen cows would start away, and had to be headed and driven back; now an active young bull would make a rush, and caused no little trouble before he was made to turn. The animals seemed to know that something was to be done with them, and made up their minds to escape it.

At last a large part of the herd were brought together, and Mr. Ramsay ordered them to be headed off towards the stock-yard, but no sooner did they begin to move than away a dozen or more would go at a time. It was hard work to bring even part of them back. At last, by hard riding and use of the whip, about two-thirds were collected in the yard. But so active were some of the young beasts that even the high fences could not keep them in, and several sprang over them in a way not many horses could have done. It took some time to brand the young beasts, and to count and sort the whole herd. As soon as this was done, Mr. Ramsay and his friends and servants started off, on a fine moonlight night, in the hopes of driving in the remainder of the herd; for this purpose they took with them a few tame cattle that the wild ones might join company, and the whole be induced to go back together. Before

long the lowing of the decoy-herd was answered from the distant forest, and as they proceeded on, numbers joined them, their large bodies seen amid the trees, and their huge horns glancing in the moonbeams. Orders had been given that not a whip should be cracked, not a word spoken. They had got on some way very well, and many wild animals had joined their ranks, when Joseph observed Tony Peach riding near him. Soon afterwards there was heard the crack of a whip, and a number of animals started off. Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Harlow, and others did their best to stop them, riding here and there and turning them quickly. Joseph kept his eye on Peach, and observed that whenever he could, without being, as he thought, noticed, he let the beasts gallop off. A good many had escaped in this way, when Joseph determined to try and stop the next that should make the attempt. A large bull was turning off, when Joseph rode to head the animal. Suddenly the beast turned on him. At that moment his horse, putting his fore feet into a hole, fell and rolled over with him. The bull came on. Peach, instead of coming to help him, with a loud laugh rode off, pretending to go after other cattle. Joseph, as he well might, shouted at the top of his voice. Just as the bull was close to him Mr. Ramsay, in chase of another beast, passed by. Seeing what had happened, he placed himself before the bull and twined the lash of his whip round its horns. The horse stood stock still, with its fore legs out ready to spring aside, should it be necessary to avoid



MR. RAMSAY AND THE BULL.

the bull or to stop the latter in its course. The bull, finding a sudden pull at its head, of course turned towards Mr. Ramsay, who, untwisting his lash, galloped round and gave it such a cut on the flank as made it turn back once more towards the herd. This gave Joseph time to remount his horse, and he was soon lashing away at the animals as before. He was much disposed to tell Mr. Ramsay what he had observed; but then he thought it was not easy to prove. “It may be thought that I want to curry favour. Still, if I find out more things certain against this man, it will be my duty to inform the master.”

Mr. Ramsay was very much vexed at not getting more of the cattle in. He did not blame Joseph, for

he knew that it was not his fault, that Peach had long been in charge of them and ought to have kept them in better order. Of course Peach excused himself, and said that the cattle were always wild, and that it was no fault of his. Joseph began to wish that he had had nothing to do with cattle, but had stuck to his sheep. He had certainly much hard work, for he had to be in the saddle early in the morning and to keep in it most of the day. Sam, though, liked it very much. Bob had now taken Sam's place and helped Mat in taking care of the sheep.

One day old Mat came to Joseph and begged him to look at the sheep. He was afraid something was the matter with some of them. Joseph examined narrowly all those which Mat thought were sick. There was no doubt that they had the distemper. It had not spread far yet. A stop must be put to it. He at once sent off Ben on horseback to acquaint Mr. Ramsay, and to bring back tobacco and other stuff for making washes. Meantime he separated the diseased animals from the rest, which he told Mat to drive to a fresh part of the run where they had not been for some time. He warned him on no account to go near any other flock. Meantime he rode round to the nearest hut to advise the shepherds to look to their sheep, to see if the distemper had showed itself among them, that they might take steps to stop it. At one of the stations he met Peach. It was one like his own, with three men, one of them having charge of a back run with cattle.

Peach was not very friendly. "I should think Ned Marks here would know as soon as a fresh hand whether or not his sheep had the distemper," he remarked with a sneer. "Some people, however, are fond of busying themselves about what doesn't concern them ; but I've just to say that they may go too far some day and find that others won't stand it."

Joseph made no answer, he was resolved to do his duty, whatever came of it.

"Never mind him ; I'm not offended," said Marks, giving a wink to Peach, which he fancied Joseph did not observe. "Here, Rudge, to show that there is no ill-will between us, do you take a glass of this good rum. I got a few bottles the last time I was down at the store. There are not many left."

"No thank you, mate," answered Joseph. "I made up my mind when I came out to this country never to touch liquor, and I find not only that I can get on without it, but that I am much the better without it. I used to take it in England, and I am ashamed to say how much of my wages went in drink. I wish to be friendly with you, Marks, but I shouldn't show my good feeling by drinking your rum."

"As you like," said Marks. "It isn't often you have such a chance in the bush. However, it's liberty hall, and no man is forced to do what he doesn't like."

Peach now seemed to take a hint from Marks, and pretended once more to be friendly with Joseph. "I don't bear malice, Rudge," he said, holding out his

hand. "May be one of these days you'll see things in a different way, and understand that I wanted only to do you a good turn."

"I hope not," answered Joseph, going towards the door. "I think I understand you pretty clearly; and I pray that I may never be brought to call black white."

"A canting hypocrite!" exclaimed Peach, as Joseph rode off.

Joseph offered up a silent prayer, "Lead us not into temptation."

As the stockman rode on he saw by the look of the sky that one of those fierce storms which occasionally visit parts of Australia, was threatening. He had reached his farthest point from home. The country was wild. There was no regular road, only a track which it required sharp eyes to find out in some places. He pushed on, hoping to get home before the storm broke. Presently, however, loud peals of thunder burst from the sky; the lightning darted along the ground and among the trees with a crackling noise, which made his horse start from side to side. Down came the rain like a water-spout, and the wind sprung up and blew in fierce gusts, tearing off huge branches of the trees, and now and then uprooting the trees themselves. Joseph saw that it would be dangerous to take shelter under any of the trees, so he kept as much as he could in the open ground.

He had not gone far when he heard a cry. It was from some fellow-creature, he was certain of that. He

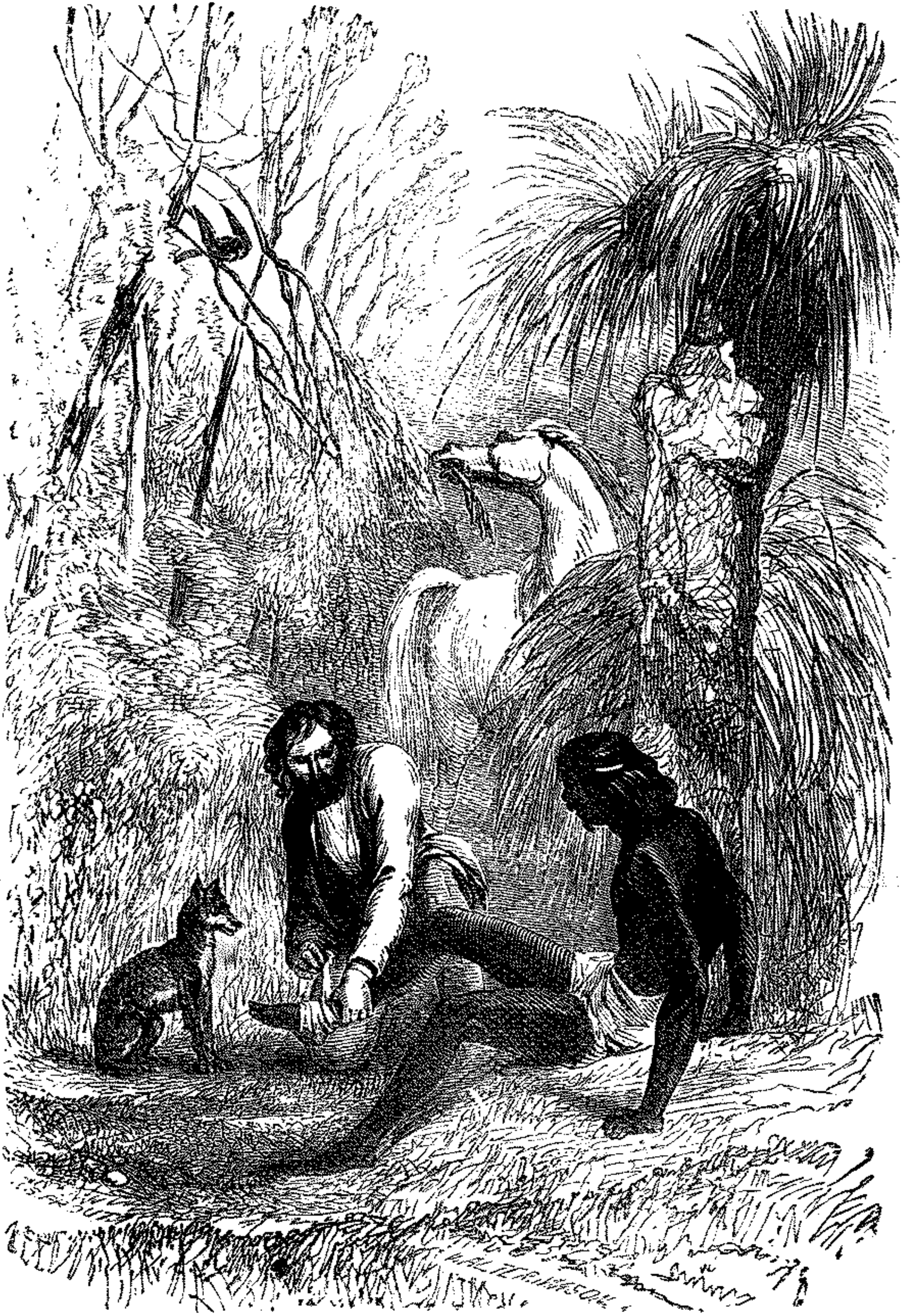
looked about on every side, and at last saw that a falling tree had struck down a black man, who lay beneath it unable to move.

Joseph fastening his horse to a stump, ran towards the poor fellow. He was alive, and his body seemed uninjured, but his foot had been caught by the trunk and held him fast. Had he been alone he must have died a horrible death, for it was clear that he could not have released himself. The black fellow saw Joseph coming, and made signs to show his gratitude, uttering a few words of broken English. When, however, Joseph came to look at the tree, he found that it would be no easy matter to get the poor black from under it. He had an axe in his belt, and with it he cut down a young sapling for a handspike, but when he tried it he found that he could not lift the heavy trunk. Then he set to work to dig under the foot, but the ground was as hard as a rock.

The black then made signs that he might drive something under it, and so lift the tree.

“He means wedges,” thought Joseph, and at once lopping off a thick branch, shaped out several; the black, in spite of the pain he was suffering, watching him with evident satisfaction. With a thick club, which served as a hammer, Joseph drove in the wedges, and in time got the tree lifted enough to draw out the black’s leg. He then carried the poor fellow to a bank and examined his foot. It had been caught in a slight hollow, and was not as much hurt as might have been expected. As well as he could

with the handkerchief off his neck, he bound up the injured limb, and then placed him on his horse.



JOSEPH AND THE NATIVE.

“I shall be late at home, but I cannot let this poor black lie out here in the woods by himself,” he thought; “it is my duty to take him to my hut and tend him till he is well. The black must have

been suffering a great deal of pain, but he bore it bravely."

"What is your name?" he asked, as he walked by his side.

"Troloo, good white man," answered the black, "Troloo lub white man."

It was pleasant to Joseph to think that the young black was grateful. For some time the storm continued, but Joseph with his injured companion, pushed on through it. On his way out he had crossed a small creek with the water not much above his horse's fetlocks. As he drew near the spot he saw that instead of the quiet blue pool, where there had been no current, there was now a foaming and roaring torrent, its muddy waters carrying down numerous roots and branches of trees. Still he thought that there could be no difficulty in crossing at that spot, and was leading the horse in, when Troloo made signs that there was much danger in so doing, and pointed higher up the creek, trying to show that they might there cross with greater safety. Joseph, like a wise man, therefore turned back. On calculating the depth of the water by the height of the bank, he judged that it was up to his arm pits, and that had he stepped into any hole, he might have sunk with his head under also.

"Ah, if it had not been for the black, I might have tried to cross, and have lost my life," he thought.

After going up the creek some way, the black pointed to a spot where the ground was very smooth and hard on either side.

“Dere, dere, cross now,” he said, and made signs to Joseph to get up on the horse.

“No, friend, a wetting won’t do me any harm, and if the horse was to stumble, with two on his back, it might be a bad job for you.”

Joseph walked into the stream boldly, leading the horse. The water rose up to his knees, then to his thighs. He kept his eyes up the stream on the watch for any branches or trunks of trees which might be floating down. Now by stopping, now by pushing on fast, he was able to avoid several, others he turned aside. For some time the water was up to his middle. The black pointed across the creek, and made signs that there was nothing to fear. At last he reached the opposite bank. Scarcely had he got out of the torrent, than the rain came down still harder than before; the wind blew furiously, tearing off branches from the brittle wood trees and sending them flying along before it. The thunder roared and rattled with long continued peals from the sky, and the lightning flashed more brightly than ever, darting, it seemed, from cloud to cloud, and then went hissing along the ground like a number of fiery serpents. The horse started and trembled, now sprang to one side, now to the other, so that Joseph could scarcely keep the black man from falling off. Still, like a true Briton, he pushed on. There was no use looking for shelter, none was to be found nearer than his own hut. Suddenly a flash darted from a cloud just overhead, and seemed to strike the ground directly in front of Joseph. A

moment before he had seen clearly. He made a few steps forward expecting again to see his way, but the bright light alone was in his eyes; nothing could he see. He rubbed his hand over his face.

“Oh, I am blind,” he cried out in his grief.

It was some time before the black could understand what had happened. He uttered some expressions showing his sorrow, in his own tongue. “Come, no fear, black fellow show way,” he said at last, taking Joseph’s hand. Thus they journeyed on, Joseph holding on to the horse, and Troloo guiding it.

The storm seemed to have spent its fury. After this the rain ceased, the thunder no longer rattled in the sky, nor did the lightning flash, and the clouds passed away. Joseph had no difficulty in knowing this. He was, however, not at all certain that Troloo was leading him towards his hut. This made him anxious, because, though he could not be very far wrong, it would delay his arrival at home. He tried to talk with the black man, but they could not make out what each other said, so they became silent. On and on they went.

In the morning he had galloped quickly over the ground; now, he was creeping along, each moment expecting to fall. Suddenly his dog Trusty started off and gave a cheerful bark, which was answered by Toby, Sam’s dog, and by old Mat’s dogs, all of which came running out, and he felt them licking his hands. He cried out, “Any one at home?” Presently he heard his wife’s voice, and Bobby’s and the rest of the children.

“Why, Joseph, what is the matter?” exclaimed poor Sarah, running up to her husband.

“Why wife, I’ve a cross to bear, I fancy,” answered Joseph, taking Sarah’s hand which she put out; “God knows what’s best. If I am to remain blind, He has some reason for it. But here is this poor black fellow, his foot is terribly hurt, and he is in great pain; look after him, I can wait, or I’ll bathe my eyes in warm water, I can do nothing else.”

With an aching heart, Sarah placed her husband in a chair, and then helped the black off the horse, and with the aid of Bobby and Mat, who came up, carried him into the hut, and placed him on Sam’s bed. She then bathed his foot and bound it up in a wet cloth, and then gave him some food. Troloo was evidently grateful, and took every means to show it. Night came, but Joseph still remained totally blind.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN the next morning broke, Joseph found himself as blind as before. It was a sad trial to him. “So many things to be done, and I not able to work,” sighed Joseph.

“The boys and I and Sally will do our best, and may be, in a day or two you will be able to see,” answered Sarah. “You’ve often said, ‘God’s will be done;’ we must say it now, husband.”

“Yes, Sarah, yes, I do say it. And how is the poor black fellow?” asked Joseph.

“His foot seems terribly bad. I wish there was a doctor to look to it, or I am afraid that he will never walk again ; I’ve kept on bathing it, and he bears the pain wonderfully.”

Early in the day, Sam returned with the tobacco and other stuff for washes, and he and old Mat set to work to mix them, and to wash the diseased sheep. While they were at work, a horseman was seen drawing near to the station, but not from the direction the master would come. It proved to be young Mr. Harlow. He had heard of the distemper having broken out among his neighbour’s sheep, and wished to know what was to be done to prevent its spreading.

On learning of the accident which had happened to Rudge, he went in to see him. “I have studied as a surgeon, and may, I hope, be of use to you,” he said. “From what I see, I have great hopes that you will soon recover with the help of remedies I will apply.”

Joseph thanked him, and begged that he would look at Troloo’s foot.

“This is a more difficult case, but the natives’ hurts heal so rapidly, that I have little doubt that he also will soon be well,” he observed.

It is not necessary to describe the means he employed. He rode over every day, though his time was of great value, and in the course of a few days, Joseph declared that he could once more see light and people moving about. Troloo’s foot was also nearly well. “A white man’s would have taken twice the time,” Mr. Harlow observed.

Troloo, however, showed no desire to go away :
 “ Black fellow lub Jo, work for Jo,” he said.

Of course Rudge was very glad to get his assistance, though he knew that he could not depend long on him, and that any moment he might set off again by himself. He could help with the sheep, but cattle have such a dislike to black men that they will not let one come near them.

When Mr. Ramsay arrived, he highly approved of all Rudge had done, and was much concerned to hear of his blindness, though Mr. Harlow assured him that he would soon recover his sight, as he shortly did. Joseph and his wife were very grateful to Mr. Harlow.

“ Do not thank me, I am but making a right use of the talents God has given me,” he answered.

He brought with him a number of small books and tracts, and told Joseph that he should be glad to have them lent to all the neighbouring shepherds and stockmen. “ We will also meet together for prayer and reading God’s word, when next I come over,” he said.

This was done ; and not only old Mat but several other shepherds and hut-keepers came to Joseph’s hut which he had prepared for them. This was the beginning of a Church in the wilderness, for after this, Mr. Harlow often came to the station, and the Miss Harlows rode over and brought books and pictures for the children and work for Sally, and stopped to show her how to do it, and also to teach the children to read.

Joseph and Sarah were very grateful. They had long felt that though they were getting good wages and saving money, it was a sad thing not to have their children taught nor be able to go to a place of worship. "Sam is not so bad a scholar, and Bobby and Sally read pretty well, but Nancy and Bill and Mary will have little chance of getting any learning," said Joseph to Mr. Harlow. "If we could have a master sometimes, it would help us; and then when there is less work to be done, the elder children can help the younger; but generally they come home so tired that all they can do is to take their suppers and go to bed."

Mr. Harlow promised that he would talk the matter over with Mr. Ramsay, and see what could be done for the children on his and the neighbouring runs. In the meantime, he left some small books and tracts, which could be carried in the pocket and read at spare moments.

It was a joyful day to Joseph Rudge and to his wife and children when he was able to say that he could see as well as ever. They did not forget to thank God who had been thus kind to them.

"It would have been terrible if you had been struck blind all alone in the forest," said Sarah, "I have often thought of that, and what a mercy it was that you found the black."

"Yes indeed, wife," answered Joseph, "I might have been drowned, too, if I had tried to cross the creek by myself. One thing I know, and I often thought of it while I was without sight, that God or-

ders all things for our good, though we do not always see the why and the wherefore things are done."

It took a long time before the sheep were quite cured of the distemper and the flocks were allowed to mingle as before.

Sam and Bob and old Mat had worked very hard, but they could not have got on alone, if Tom Wells had not been sent to help them. Tom was a first-rate rider, and a fair stockman, so he was sent to look after the cattle. He was lodged in old Mat's house. He had been thus employed only a day or two, when Peach managed to meet him.

"Stock keeping better than bullock driving, lad, eh?" were the first words Peach uttered.

"I should think so, mate," said Tom.

"More profit to be made of it," observed Peach.

"Wages is wages," observed Tom. "If I agree for so much, I take it, and must be content; if I take more than that, it's robbery to my mind, and with that I've no business."

"Oh those are Rudge's notions, he's been putting you up to that sort of stuff," remarked Peach, with a look of contempt; and then he muttered, "But I'll be even with him and you too."

"They are the notions of all decently honest men," said Wells, turning away from the tempter.

Peach was not a man to give up a plan he had once formed. As he could not get the help of Rudge and Wells, he tried other means to get possession of his master's cattle. He had always made friends, as far as he could, with the blacks, a tribe of whom often

pitched their tents near his hut. He was a sober man, and did not mind parting with his rum. All sober men are not good men, though drunkenness rarely fails to lead to crime and punishment. He had looked out for the blacks, and had told them that they must help him to get the cattle. They had managed from time to time to drive off a few calves.

As has been said, cattle have a fear of blacks, and, scenting them at a long distance, scamper off as soon as they draw near.

Thus Peach could not get much help from his friends. He now set off again on horseback to pay them a visit; for they were camped some miles away. He took care to go provided with presents, a few coloured handkerchiefs and knives, and a few other things.

On his way, his horse put his foot into a hole, and fell. Peach was thrown over his head. He was not much hurt, so he got up, and catching his horse, mounted again.

“Now I am on you I will pay you off, you brute,” he exclaimed, thrashing the poor animal with his heavy whip. The horse dashed on for some way, then stopped short. He was dead lame. In vain Peach tried to make him move. To return would have taken longer than to go on; so dismounting, he led on the animal, hoping to reach the blacks’ camp before nightfall. He went on and on, and it grew darker and darker, till he thought that he should have to camp out. He had no fancy to do that by himself. There were no wild beasts in the country

to fear, and he would have told any one who asked him, that he did not believe in ghosts and spirits and such-like gentry; still there was something he did not like when he was all alone in the dark woods at night. His conscience was not at ease. There were strange sounds and sights he could not make out. He had no almighty Friend to whom he could offer up a prayer for protection; no wonder that he was a coward. He still went on, though he could hardly find the way; when on a sudden he stopped, and as he leaned forward, staring with wide open eyes and hair on end, he saw a blazing fire in the midst of an open glade, and on the farther side a hideous band of skeleton forms dancing and twisting and turning in all sorts of ways. Now, after leaping about furiously for a moment, they would on a sudden disappear, and not one was to be seen.

For a minute or more all was quiet, and Peach hoped that he had seen the last of them; when like a flash they all came back and jumped about as before. He stood trembling with fear, he would have run away if he could, but where was he to run to?

This fearful show went on for some time, when the most fearful shrieks and yells were heard.

“Why I do believe it’s the black fellows dancing a corrobory,” he muttered to himself. “What a fool I was! Now they yell, I make out their voices.”

Leading his horse, which was more frightened at the shrieks than he had been by the sight of the skeletons, he walked into the middle of a group of blacks. He now saw by the light of the fire, which

was made to blaze up brightly, that on the front of each of the men a skeleton was painted with white chalk. These were seen when the light of the fire fell on them, but when they turned round and only their black backs were towards the fire, they seemed to have gone away altogether. He knew that it would not do to show the anger he felt at the fright they had given him. He stood quiet, therefore, with some of the old men looking on till the dance was over. He was known to most of the natives, who welcomed him in the odd jargon in which the white settlers and blacks talk to each other.

“He would tell them by-and-by what he had come to see them about, and in the meantime he had some presents to make,” he said.

The delight of the savages at getting the handkerchiefs and knives was very great. He told them that there were more for them if they would do what he wished. He then called some of the elders round him, and told them what he advised them to do. He told them that he was the black fellows’ friend, as they had proof, but that the other white men in those parts were their enemies, and that they should drive them away if they could, or kill them, and that then, they might have all their sheep and cattle for themselves. The poor savages seemed to understand this sort of reasoning, and promised to do as he advised. He sat up till a late hour talking with them. The whole party then lay down in the “gunyio,” or camp, with a few boughs or sheets of bark over their heads as their only covering, though

most of them had bright fires burning at their feet outside. It was some time before Peach's busy brain would let him go to sleep. At last he went off, and began to snore. Not long after, a black might have been seen passing close to him. "Oh you one white villain!" he exclaimed, shaking his head at him, "you call black man savage, you ten times worse; but black fellow teach you that you no more clever than he."

Saying this, the black disappeared among the trees around.

CHAPTER IV.

A SHORT time before this, Troloo, who had learned to be very useful with the sheep, had gone off without giving any warning. It was the way of black fellows, so Joseph could not complain, though he was very sorry to lose him, especially when there was so much work to be done.

Joseph did not let any of his family be idle. They had learned to make and to do all sorts of things. They made all their candles and soap. They spun wool when their fingers had nothing else to do, and then knitted it into socks and waistcoats. The boys could knit, and when they were out shepherding, they had plenty of time to make all the socks they could wear. The younger ones, among other things, learned to make baskets out of long reeds, which they gathered near the creek. One day, when they had used up all

their reeds, Nancy, with little Bill and Mary, set out to gather a fresh stock. When they got down to the edge of the creek they saw some long reeds growing on the other side. "See, see, how fine and tall they are, Nancy; we must go over and get them," cried little Bill. "I know a place higher up where we can cross easily."

Nancy saw no harm in doing as Bill said, for they could get no reeds on that side. They went on and on, and still they did not get to the place he spoke of. "It can only be a little farther; come on, Nancy," he cried out, running on with Mary. Nancy followed. "Here it is," he said, at last, and they began to cross. The water deepened. "No fear; do you, Nancy, lift up Mary, and I can get across easily enough," said Bill. They all got safe over. The creek twisted a good deal, and Bill thought, and Nancy thought also, that they would make a short cut across the country from the place where they then were to that where the rushes grew. A hill rose up close to the creek, and they were certain that if they went round it they should find the water on the other side. The sky was covered with clouds and the sun was not to be seen, so that there were no shadows to guide them. They walked on and on, thinking each moment that they should reach the river. Little Bill was sure that they could not have made a mistake, and ran on before his sisters shouting out, "Come on, Nancy; come on, Mary." The girls followed as fast as they could, but there were no signs of the creek. They began to be puzzled. Nancy fancied that Bill must

have made a mistake. "No, no ; it's farther off than I thought, that's all," said Bill. "We shan't find it by standing still."

Bill was a sturdy little chap, though so young. "Mary bery, bery tired," cried the youngest girl. She couldn't speak plain, she was so young.

"Well, sit down, little one, and rest, and we'll see what we've got for you," said Bill, in an encouraging tone—he dearly loved little Mary. He searched in his pockets and brought out some cold damper and cheese, and some biscuit and raisins, and several other articles. The children all sat down and feasted off the food. It revived them.

"We must get on now," said Nancy, rising. "O Bill, where can we have got to?"

"All right," answered Bill, "we shall find the water in ten minutes ; only we must keep moving." They went on again for ten minutes, twenty, thirty, an hour or more. Bill at last began to cry and wring his hands. "Oh dear, oh dear, we have lost our way!"

"I was afraid so, long ago," said Nancy. "All we've to do is to try and find it."

That was more easily said than done. Nancy felt very anxious, but she kept her thoughts to herself, for fear of frightening Bill and Mary.

Bill had kept up bravely till now, but little Mary already looked very tired. Nancy took her hand and led her on. Bill then took her up on his back, but he had not gone far when he had to ask her if she was not rested. His legs and back ached ; he put

her down. She could run on a little way she thought. She soon, however, again said she was tired, and Nancy took her up ; but poor Nancy could not carry her far, for Mary was a fat, heavy child. Where they had got to, Nancy could not tell. Time went by, too, faster than they thought. It got dusk, and there were no signs of the creek. Night was coming on.

“ We cannot go farther in the dark,” said Nancy.

“ No ; I must make a ‘ gunyio ’ for you and Mary,” said Bill, who had tried hard to keep up his courage.

He cut down some boughs, and Nancy and Mary collected some long, dry grass, and they built a rude hut, like those the natives use, and made a bed. They then all crept in. They had no fear about being in the forest by themselves at night, only they wished that they were at home, as they knew their father and mother would be frightened. There were no wild beasts to hurt them, and Joseph Rudge had taken care that his children should have no foolish notions about ghosts and spirits.

“ If such things come on earth it’s only because God lets them, and He would not let them come in shapes to frighten people, especially little children and those He loves,” he used to say to them.

The three children knelt down and said their prayers ; then, without fear, they crept into the hut, and were soon asleep.

When Joseph and Tom Wells came back from looking after the cattle, the children had not returned. Still Sarah thought that they would come every

minute, and was looking out for them. Joseph was very tired.

“You stay quiet, mate,” said Tom, “I will go and look out for the young ones; I shall find them fast enough.”

Tom rode off, and not long after Sam and Ben came in with old Mat from herding the sheep. The lads were very eager to set off to look for their little brother and sisters. Taking a sup of tea and a piece of damper in their hands, away they went. Mat promised to herd the sheep till they came back. Joseph and Sarah all this time were very anxious for their little ones. Still she got the supper ready, hoping to have them brought back safe to her. There were several good things—a damper, a dish of stewed mutton, and a parrot pie, made with the birds which Tom Wells had shot that morning and brought to her. Parrots in that country are as common as pigeons in England, and are generally cooked in pies.

It was quite dark when Sam and Ben came back. They had found no traces of the children. Tom came in some time after. Not a sign of the children.

“God’s will be done!” said Joseph.

“Oh we shall find them to-morrow, mate, never fear,” said Tom Wells.

The party eat their supper with sad hearts, but not in silence, for they talked over and over what could have become of the children. They could make no further search that night. Tom went to his hut, promising to be ready to start again at break

of day. Ben went out to look after his sheep at night. That must not be neglected.

Sarah was up long before daybreak to get the breakfast ready. Often and often she went to the door of the hut, hoping to hear her young ones voices returning home. Joseph mounted his horse, and went off in one direction, Tom in another, and Sam in another. They were to return at noon. Old Mat and Ben had to look after the sheep. Poor Sarah and Sally worked away in and about the hut as hard as possible, but they could not help thinking and talking about the dear little ones, and what had become of them. Some time had passed, when Sally cried out that she heard voices, and, running out, she saw three people on horseback cantering up to the hut. They were Mr. Harlow and his two sisters. They had come over about the school. They were very sorry to hear that the children were missing. Mr. Harlow said that he would go off at once to look for them. He had given his horse a handful of grain, and was just starting, when a black came running up at full speed towards the hut. Sally, who first saw him, said she was quite sure it was Troloo; so he was. He reached the door of the hut out of breath.

“Oh, Missie Rudge, black fellow come, kill you piccaninies, sheep, old Mat, all, all,” he cried out as soon as he could speak. What he said was enough to frighten Sarah.

“Then the blacks must have found our poor, dear children, and they have killed them,” she said, and burst into tears.

“No, black fellow find piccaninies,” said Troloo, looking up from the ground on which he had thrown himself.

Mr. Harlow, who had dismounted from his horse, cross-questioned the black as to the report he had brought. As far as he could make out, a large party of natives were on their way to the hut, with the purpose of burning it, and killing all the family. Still he thought that they would not dare to do what they threatened, and tried to persuade poor Mrs. Rudge not to be frightened.

“If it was not for the dear children I wouldn’t be frightened; but what I fear is that the cruel black fellows have got hold of them, and will do them a harm.”

Mr. Harlow had now to consider what was best to be done. He wished first to place his sisters in safety, and then to fortify the hut, so that when the natives arrived they might find all things prepared for them. He could do little, however, till Joseph, and Bob, and Tom Wells returned. He learned from Sarah where Mat and Sam were to be found. He begged his sisters who were well accustomed to find their way across the country, to ride home and to send three of their men, well armed, to help drive away the blacks, while he went to warn Mat and Sam, and to get them to come home. Meantime Sarah got ready some food for poor Troloo. Every now and then she went to the door, or sent Sally to see if Joseph or Tom were coming with the children.

At last noon came, and soon after Tom appeared,

but he had found no traces of the lost ones. The poor mother's heart sank within her. Tom rather laughed at the notion of the blacks daring to attack the station, and said that they would get more than they expected if they came. Mr. Harlow and Mat and Bob now arrived, and Sam also returned. He was very downcast at not having found his little brother and sisters.

“Now lads, the best thing you can do is to gallop off to Mr. Ramsay, to get his help,” said Mr. Harlow to Sam and Bob. “It is better to be too strong than too weak; and I hope that the blacks, when they find that we are ready for them, will take themselves off again.”

The lads went off as hard as they could go, Sam catching a fresh horse for the ride.

Mr. Harlow, with Tom and Mat, helped by Sarah and Sally, set to work to prepare for the attack of the natives. They fastened up the windows, just leaving room for the barrels of their rifles to pass through; then they got up a number of the stakes from the cattle pens and put up a strong paling in front of each of the doors. This done, they put up a strong paling, or palisade in front of the hut, and began to carry it all round, so that none of the natives could get near enough to fire the hut, without a good chance of being shot. This took some time, and the day was drawing to a close before Joseph himself was seen riding homewards. He brought none of his young ones with him. The meeting between him and his wife was very sad. All he could

say was, "God's will be done! We will start away to-morrow again, and they cannot have got far from home." He was much astonished at the preparations made for the expected attack of the natives, and thanked Mr. Harlow warmly for what he had done.

"Why, Rudge, I could not leave your wife and daughters without you, but now that you have returned I must set off to look after my sister-kind. I did not half like letting them go alone," said Mr. Harlow. "As the blacks have not appeared as yet, as they never travel at nights, I do not think that they will come till to-morrow, and before that you will have plenty of assistance."

The evening came, and the night drew on, and still no natives appeared. Troloo offered to go out and learn if they were near. He thought that they might have encamped not far off, so as to attack the station at break of day. Once he would have been afraid to move about himself in the dark, but now he said that as he was going to help white man, white man's God would take care of him. Mat had gone to look after the sheep, for it was not safe to leave them alone at night, lest the dingoes (the wild dogs of the country) should get among them. Thus only Joseph and Tom Wells remained in the hut with Sarah and Sally. It was a sad time for them, they thought more about the poor children than themselves. Tom was a kind-hearted fellow, and did his best to keep up their spirits.

"As you often say, Joseph, I say to you, trust in God, and all will come right at last."

“Very hard, in a case like this, to follow out what one knows to be true,” answered Rudge.

“Yes, Joseph ; but this is just a case where we have to show our faith. I know that God loves us and that keeps me up,” said Sarah, though her voice trembled as she spoke.

All this time her dear little ones might be starving, or dying of thirst, or have been carried off by the blacks, or have fallen into a water-hole.

It was near ten at night when Troloo came back. It was some time before he could make his friends understand that the black fellows, to the number of fifty, or more, were camped at a spot, to reach which, from the hut, would take about an hour. They had been having a war dance, he said, and that showed that they were about to attack the place. They were armed with spears and clubs and boomerangs. The last weapon is a moon-shaped piece of hard wood. The blacks throw it with great force, and can make it whirl back into their own hands. They can also throw their spears to a great distance with good aim. This news made Joseph more than ever anxious for the arrival of Mr. Ramsay and Sam and Bob. No one was inclined to go to sleep. Sarah and Sally lay down, but were up every ten minutes looking out of doors, and listening for sounds.

Before day break Troloo was on foot, and stole out. He was gone some time ; Tom thought that he had taken fright, and run away. Joseph said that he was sure he was faithful ; so it proved. He came back in half an hour, saying that the blacks were coming

on, and would soon be at the station. Joseph and Tom looked out eagerly in all directions for their friends. Even old Mat had not come in. Should they put Sarah and Sally on horseback, and make their escape?

“The property here was put under my charge, and I cannot leave it,” said Rudge. “As long as I have life I must fight to defend it.”

“But your wife and Sally,” said Tom.

“His wife will stay by her husband, as I hope yours will, Tom Wells, when you get one,” said Sarah.

“Then I will stop,” said Tom, looking at Sally.

“And I would stay with father and mother, even if I had the chance of going,” said Sally.

There were three rifles in the hut; Sarah knew how to load them. She was to do so as fast as she could, and Troloo was to hand them to Joseph and Tom. They were to fire as quick as possible, so that the blacks might think that there were many more people in the hut than there were, and so be frightened and go away. All was ready; still no friends had come, but as they looked out, a number of black figures were seen stealing out from among the trees. They collected in a large body, and then came towards the hut flourishing their spears. They stopped when they saw no one, and looked cautiously about. Joseph was very anxious not to fire, or to hurt any one.

“To my mind its the white men has often set the bad example to the poor black fellows, from what I have heard, and I don’t want to do the same sort of thing,” he observed.

It was clear that the natives couldn't make out how things stood. They stopped, and talked, and looked about. Then some drew near and ran off again, just as boys run into the water on the sea shore, and out again, fearing some danger.

"We will pray to be delivered from these poor black fellows," said Joseph; "It's what God tells us to do when we are in danger."

He did as he proposed, and the rest joined him in the prayer.

Troloo could not make out exactly what his white friends were about. He expected to see them begin to fire away and kill his black relations. Still he seemed to think that they deserved to be punished. At last the blacks, seeing no one, came on altogether.

"Now let us shout at the top of our voices, and fire over their heads," whispered Joseph; "may be they'll take fright and run off."

The savages drew still nearer, and then Joseph, and Tom, and Sarah, and her daughter, all shouted out, and shrieked at the top of their voices, and the two men at the same moment fired their rifles. The savages, hearing the whistling of the bullets just above their heads, looked about astonished, and then ran off as fast as they could run. They did not go far, however, but, stopping, began to talk to each other, and seeing no one following, took courage.

"I am afraid that that trick won't answer again," observed Tom; "the next time we must rush out upon them, and take one or two of them prisoners."

“We might as well try to catch eels with our fingers,” answered Joseph. “If they come on again we must, I fear, fight it out. We ought not to leave the shelter of our hut as long as it will hold us.”

“Oh, no, no ; let us stay where we are,” said Sarah.

The blacks, however, did not seem inclined to let them do that. Once more they plucked up courage and came on, whirling their spears.

The rifles were again loaded ; still Joseph did not wish to fire at the savages. The blacks got quite close, and then sent a shower of spears, which came quivering against the posts which were round the hut, several piercing its thin walls. Fortunately none came through the openings.

“We must give it them in earnest next time,” said Tom.

“Wait a bit, mate ; as long as they don’t do more than that, they will do us no harm.”

As soon as the natives had thrown their darts, they ran off again, expecting a volley from the rifles ; then back they came and threw more of their spears. As before, a few came partly through the wall, but did no harm, as Sarah and Sally kept on the other side, and the men stood behind the stout posts which supported the roof. The blacks came nearer and nearer, sending their spears still farther through the walls.

“I would do anything rather than kill those poor savages,” said Rudge.

“But if we don’t, they’ll kill us, mate, and it

won't do to fire over their heads again, observed Tom, raising his rifle, and covering one of the black leaders. "I could pick that fellow off if I fired."

"Let's try what another shout will do, and if that does not put them to flight, we must fire at last," said Rudge.

Again they all shouted together, Trolloo joining in the cry. The blacks, as before, looked about them, and some, who were about to throw their spears, stopped with them poised in their hands. Others, however, seemed to be telling them that they were cowards, and at last the whole party whirling round their spears more fiercely than before, rushed towards the hut. Rudge's finger was on the trigger, and so was Tom's, when a faint shout was heard in the distance, like an echo of theirs. It was repeated, and another was heard as if from a different direction.

"Don't fire, Mat," cried Rudge; "see, the black fellows are running. Thank God that we have not had to shed man's blood."

"And let us thank Him that our lives have mercifully been saved," said Sarah, as they opened the door of the hut, from which not a black was to be seen.

In another minute Mr. Ramsay and Sam and Bob rode up to the door, and Mr. Harlow and several men appeared at a little distance. Mr. Ramsay was inclined to follow the blacks, and to kill some of them, but Mr. Harlow begged that he would not hurt them, as he was sure that they were set on by some one else, and that at all events they were ignorant savages, and knew no better.

CHAPTER V.

MR. RAMSAY praised Rudge and Tom Wells for the way that they had behaved in defending the hut, and old Mat also for having stuck by his sheep, instead of running away. After listening to the account Troloo had to give, he was sure that they had been set on by others. He determined therefore to ride on and speak to them with some of his men.

Mr. Harlow was about to offer to accompany him, when Sarah's cry of, "Oh, my children—my children, what are to become of them?" made him turn to her, and promise to set out at once in search of them.

Joseph wished to go, but his friends would not let him.

"No," said Mr. Harlow, "you must stay and take care of your wife and daughter. We will take Sam and Wells, and two of my men, and Troloo. He will be of more help than all the rest of us, I suspect. If the blacks have found them, which I don't think they have, he will get them back; and if they have wandered off into the woods, he will trace them out."

Troloo at once understood what was required of him, and the two parties without delay set out, while Joseph and Sarah remained behind.

Troloo was the only person on foot, and he went hunting about like a pointer ranging a field, looking out for the tracks of the children. He soon found them, and quickly ran along the edge of the creek till he came to the place where they had crossed. He

then went on, pointing out to Mr. Harlow the hill which they intended to go round. It did not, however, take the turn they had expected, but ran off from the creek, and this it was that had thrown them out. Troloo now led on quickly till he found the spot where they had slept. He showed how they had got up in the morning, and how the eldest girl had knelt down just outside the hut with the little ones near her, and how they had then set off running. Soon the youngest had got tired and gone slower and slower. For several hours they went on, and then the eldest girl lifted up the youngest and carried her, and then they all sat down. Next, the boy got up and ran about in all directions and climbed a tree to try and find out the way they should take. He thought that he had found it, for he did not sit down again, but they all went on together quickly—sometimes he, and sometimes his sister, carrying the youngest, and sometimes she ran, they holding her hands. All this the black discovered as easily as if it had passed before his eyes, from the look of the grass and shrubs.

Were they getting nearer? No. All this time they were going farther and farther from home, and what seemed strange, going upwards towards some high hills in the distance. This is said to be always the case, when people lose themselves in the woods. If there is high land they are certain to go towards it.

They came after some time to a marshy spot where some rushes grew. The children had picked some of these and drank a little water from a pool which

they had dug with their hands. They had had nothing to eat. Indeed, in few countries does a stranger find it more difficult to exist in the woods than in Australia, though the natives can nearly always obtain a meal from roots, or insects, or slugs, or birds, or small animals which they trap. At length they reached a spot where Troloo said that the children had spent their second night out. Bill had begun to build a hut as before, but he had got tired, and they had all slept close together with only a few boughs over them. The weather was fine, as it is in that country for the greater part of the year, but it was chilly at night. Again the children had started off by daylight, running at first, but soon growing tired, and sturdy Bill had carried little Mary for a long time on his back.

Before Mr. Harlow's party could reach another of the children's camping places, it grew dark, and they were obliged to camp themselves. There was no longer much fear of their having fallen into the hands of the savages. There was much talk that night round the camp-fire about the poor children, and few of the party expected, after they had been lost so long, to find them alive.

"One thing is certain, my friends, that we must push on as fast as we can go, and Troloo can lead us. Without the help of the black we could not have found our way at all, and after this let none of us abuse the natives as stupid fellows. They make good use of the talents they possess. I wish that we could say the same of all white people."

So eager was Mr. Harlow to push on, that he breakfasted before daybreak, and as soon as Troloo could make out the tracks of the children, the party moved on. It was wonderful how persevering the little creatures had been, and how they had held out. On and on they had gone, stopping to rest only for a short time. Little Mary now was too weak to walk alone. The other two held her up between them or carried her on their backs. Troloo had gone on without faltering as yet, but now they reached some hard, stony ground, and after going backwards and forwards several times he shook his head and said that he could not find the track of the children. They must go across it. Perhaps it might be found on the other side. Mr. Harlow and his party went across the stony ground, but they looked up and down in vain. All the day was spent, night came on, and still Troloo was unsuccessful. They had again to camp.

“We must try again in the morning,” said Mr. Harlow, “I will never give up till I find them.”

“Yes, Troloo find to-morrow,” said the black, “Troloo lub Rudge.”

The rest of the party said also that nothing would make them give in. They scarcely slept, so eager were they to be off, knowing that every minute might make a difference whether the lives of the children were saved or not. The instant they could see, after breakfast, they were on the move, looking in all directions for the tracks. Two hours or more passed, when Troloo was seen capering in the distance, and beckoning them to come on. He had found the

tracks, and they were very clear. Now they pushed on faster than ever. The little creatures had toiled on, but they had become very weak, still the elder ones had carried the youngest. Once Bill had fallen, but had got up ; Nancy had taken Mary from him, and they had gone on. It was near the evening when Troloo, who kept ahead, was seen to move on fast and beckon to the rest. Mr. Harlow followed him fast. He stopped and pointed to a bank overhung by trees. There lay the three children. Were they alive ? Mr. Harlow's heart sunk within him. He leaped from his horse as he reached the spot, and leaned over the young children. They seemed to be sleeping.

“ Father, are you come for us ? ” said a low voice. “ We couldn't help it, we tried to get home.”

It was Nancy who spoke ; she had taken off her own outer petticoat and shawl to wrap up little Mary, who lay asleep in her arms by her side. Bill opened his eyes and said, “ Father,” and then closed them again.

“ Thank God they are alive,” exclaimed Mr. Harlow, instantly mixing a little brandy-and-water and pouring it on their lips. Nancy was at once able to swallow a few drops—so could Bill after a little time. Mr. Harlow had with forethought put some oranges in his pocket. A few drops helped little Mary to revive. He wisely fed the children very slowly ; at first with only a few crumbs of biscuit at a time moistened with water. It seemed probable that they would not have lived another hour had

they not been discovered ; and certainly, had they been fed as Troloo would have liked to feed them, they would have died immediately. In a short time Nancy recovered enough to give an account of their adventures. It was then proved that Troloo had found out as he followed up their track exactly what had happened.

Mr. Harlow now had a litter made on which the three children were carried towards his house. Having gone some distance, they camped, and a hut was built in which they were placed, and he and Sam and Tom Wells sat up all night by turns watching them and giving them food as they required it. It made Sam's heart leap with joy when little Mary looked up, and said, "Is dat oo Sam ? Tank oo," and then went off to sleep calmly. The next day they reached Mr. Harlow's station, where the young ladies took them in charge, and soon, under God's blessing, they were restored to health.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. RAMSAY was joined in his pursuit of the blacks by a party of native police, who are just as ready to take up their countrymen as are the whites. As the whole party were well mounted, they soon came up with the runaways. As soon as the blacks saw their pursuers, they set off again, but were quickly overtaken. Several of them, including two of their chief men, were made prisoners. One of the police

reported that he had seen a white man galloping away through the woods—that the stranger was very well mounted, and that he could not overtake him. This confirmed Mr. Ramsay's suspicions that the blacks had been set on to attack the station by some white man, though as yet he had no idea who that person could be. The black prisoners were brought before him, and he examined them by means of the sergeant of the black police. It was a long business, for it was not always easy to understand the sergeant himself. However, at length Mr. Ramsay came to the conclusion that the culprit was a stockman or shepherd living in the neighbourhood.

While the prisoners were carried to the station, Mr. Ramsay went round to call at the huts of the stockmen. The first he reached was that of Peach. Neither he nor his mate were within. A kettle was on the hearth boiling, and a damper baking below. The provision casks were open, and pork and meal had evidently been taken from them in a hurry. Their guns and ammunition had also been carried off. There were other signs that the occupants of the hut had escaped in a hurry.

“We need not search farther,” said Mr. Ramsay with a sigh. “I thought that Peach was an honest man, but things are much against him at present.”

Several of the men now spoke out, and said that they had no doubt that Peach was a rogue, that they had long thought him one, and that they were always surprised that the master trusted him.

“It would have been doing me a service if you

had spoken before," said Mr. Ramsay; "I might then have prevented Peach from committing an act for which he will be transported, if he escapes hanging."

It is to be hoped that they saw their error. Servants, by not giving warning of the misdeeds of others, often injure their employers and themselves, and do harm rather than good to those they wish to serve.

It was a happy day for Joseph Rudge and his wife when their children were restored to them as strong and well as ever; and truly grateful were they to Heaven for the mercy which had been shown them. Rough old Mat shed tears of joy when he took little Mary in his arms.

"To think that this little tiny creature should have gone on so many days without eating or drinking, when I have known strong men, who have lost their way, die in less time," he exclaimed as he kissed her again and again.

"But God watches over the young and innocent. He watches over us all, mate, and we old ones should know more of His love and care if we could but become like the young and pure," remarked Joseph. "We are told that we must become like little children, that is, in our trust in God's love and our obedience and faith."

"Ah yes, but that is a hard matter for the old and hardened," sighed Mat.

"Yes, but it is a blessed thought that God's grace is sufficient for even such, if they will but seek it," observed Rudge.

Nothing very particular happened at the station

for some time. The children, as may be supposed, did not wander out by themselves any more. Joseph and the rest of the men, however, had a great deal more to do in consequence of the flight of Peach and his mate. They also had to help in getting back the cattle he had carried off. Mr. Ramsay was very much pleased with the way Joseph had acted, and increased his wages by ten pounds a year, while to Sam and Bob he gave five pounds more each.

After this there was a marked change in Mr. Ramsay. He was always looked on as a worthy, upright man, but he had been inclined to stand somewhat aloof from his neighbours, Mr. Harlow and his sisters, because they were known to be religious. Not a week passed, however, that he did not pay a visit to Upland, Mr. Harlow's station, and sometimes he went twice a week, and was often seen riding out with the Misses Harlow. It then became known that he had united with Mr. Harlow to send for a missionary minister, who would go about among the out-stations and preach and hold school as best he could. Mr. Bolton was his name. He lost no time in coming. His plan was to preach, and then to set lessons to all the learners, many of them grown-up people, and to help those who required it, and then to hear them when next he came that way. When Mr. Bolton came to the head station, Mr. Ramsay always attended, and after a time formed a class, and taught himself. It was said that he was going to marry one of the Miss Harlows. A word spoken in season may do good ;

and there can be little doubt that the good example set by Joseph Rudge had a great effect in bringing about an important change in the character of his master.

While many of those who went to the gold diggings came back as poor as they started, and with loss of health, Joseph and his family, by remaining at their posts and doing their duty to their employer, prospered, and were well and happy.

One afternoon Sarah and Sally and Nancy were at work in the hut. Nancy was able now to do almost as much as Sally. Joseph and his boys were out with the cattle or sheep. Bill was also able to go shepherding. Little Mary was playing in front of the door; she had not learned to do much yet. Her sisters heard her cry, "Man coming, man coming." They looked out. A man on horseback, with tattered clothes, patched with skins, rode up. His eyes were sunken, his cheeks thin.

"I want food. Here, girls, bring me some damper, and tea, and mutton, if you have it, a glass of milk and rum. Quick! I am starving," he said in a hollow voice.

His looks showed that he spoke the truth.

"Won't you come in and rest?"

"No, no; I'm not to be caught so," answered the man, looking about suspiciously. "But quick, girl, with the food."

Sally went in and took him out some damper and a slice of mutton, while Nancy was getting some tea. He ate the food like a starving man and

then tossed off a large basin of tea. When Sarah saw him first from the window she thought she knew him. His way of speaking made her sure.

“Now girls, just bring me out your father’s powder flask and shot belt, and any canister of powder there is in the hut. My flask is empty, and I must have it filled.”

On hearing these words, Sarah emptied the flask into a jar, which she hid away, and with it the canister of powder, and then sent out Nancy with the empty flask. The man swore fiercely when he found that there was no powder in the flask.

“At all events, get me some more food. I don’t know when I may be able to find another meal, and if there had been time you should have given me a hot one.”

“That is Tony Peach,” said Sarah, as her daughter came in to get more food. “He has taken to the bush, and that is what his life has brought him to.”

The girls took out as much food as Peach could eat, but he wanted more, and told them that he must have enough to fill both his saddle-bags. They brought him out all the food they had cooked in the hut. As he was stowing away the food in his bags, he happened to look up, and saw two or three horsemen coming towards the hut. Letting the remainder of the damper and cheese and meat drop, he gathered up his reins and galloped off as hard as he could go. The horsemen were Joseph and Tom and Sam. They rode direct to the hut. When they

heard who the stranger was, Tom and Sam were for giving chase.

“No,” said Joseph, “we have no authority to take him up. Leave him in God’s hands. He is welcome to the food the girls gave him.”

It might have been better if Peach had been seized at that time, for, soon after this, several robberies were committed in different parts of the colony, and always by two men supposed to be Peach and his mate. Travellers from the gold diggings were attacked; huts were entered, and even farm-houses, and arms and ammunition and food and any valuables the thieves could lay hands on were carried off.

Another trying time for sheep and cattle owners as well as farmers, now arrived. There had been less rain than usual, and as the summer advanced the heat increased, and the creeks and water-holes dried up. In many spots where there had been for years a pool of pure water, there was nothing now but a bed of hard, cracked mud. Some stations were altogether deserted, and shepherds had often to drive their flocks long distances to water. Joseph Rudge had lately been made overseer, and it was his duty to ride round the country in all directions to search for water-holes. It was sad to watch the water get less and less in a hole, and to know that in a few days it would dry up and that another must be found or that the sheep or cattle would die. Before that time Joseph generally managed by an active search, to secure a fresh water-hole. While other owners were losing their sheep and cattle by thousands, Mr. Ram-

say found that only a few hundreds of his had died owing to being driven of necessity very fast to fresh water-holes.

One day as Joseph was on his way from a distant station, he saw smoke rising out of a wood.

While he was looking towards the spot, the smoke grew thicker and thicker, and presently flames burst out. Now they ran up the trees, now along the tall lank grass dried by the heat. They darted from tree to tree—the bush (as the forest is called) was on fire. The flames spread with fearful quickness. He galloped on into the open country where there was thinner grass. The bush reached all the way to his house. As he watched the rapid manner in which the fire extended, he saw that no time was to be lost. Fast as his horse galloped, the flames went faster, leaping as it were from tree to tree with a loud roar and crackle, the thick smoke forming a black cloud overhead, while kangaroos and other animals rushed out of the bush to find safety in the open country. Had Joseph been able to venture through the forest he would soon have reached his hut, but he had to make a long round to avoid it. He galloped on still hoping to get there before the flames reached it. Their property would certainly be destroyed, but he prayed that his family might make their escape to a place of safety. He seemed to be getting ahead of the fire, but as he looked every now and then over his shoulder, he saw it extending as far as the eye could reach, a wall of leaping flames with a roof of dark smoke. In some places it ran along

the ground out from the forest where the grass was long enough to feed it, while in others it soon went out for want of fuel. Numbers of the animals and birds must have perished, and many animals rushed past with their hair singed, and several birds fell down dead before him. The ground was uneven and stony, but nothing stopped him, and at last his hut came in sight. The fire was still nearly a mile from it, but it was coming on quickly. He found Sarah and the children standing at the door, much frightened, with the few things of value they had in their hands.

“Why, Sarah, I should have thought you knew that flour and pork would be more use to us than those things,” he exclaimed with a laugh, which somewhat took away her fear, “but we may save the hut yet. Bring out those three reaping-hooks, and all the axes and knives, and all hands must cut away the grass round the hut. Here come Tom Wells and Sam and Ben and Bill.” A large circle was cut, and the grass was cleared round all the palings. It was then set on fire, and the flames went hissing along the ground towards the already burning forest. In this way a large space was cleared, and Joseph and his sons were able to keep watch on his own and Mat’s hut, and the out-buildings, and to knock out any sparks as soon as they appeared. In this way, all the pens and other property on the station was preserved.

This done, they again mounted their horses and galloped off to look after the cattle which they had

reason to fear might have been frightened by the fire. Their search was long, but they found the whole herd collected in a stony valley, where there was little grass, and where the fire had not touched them.

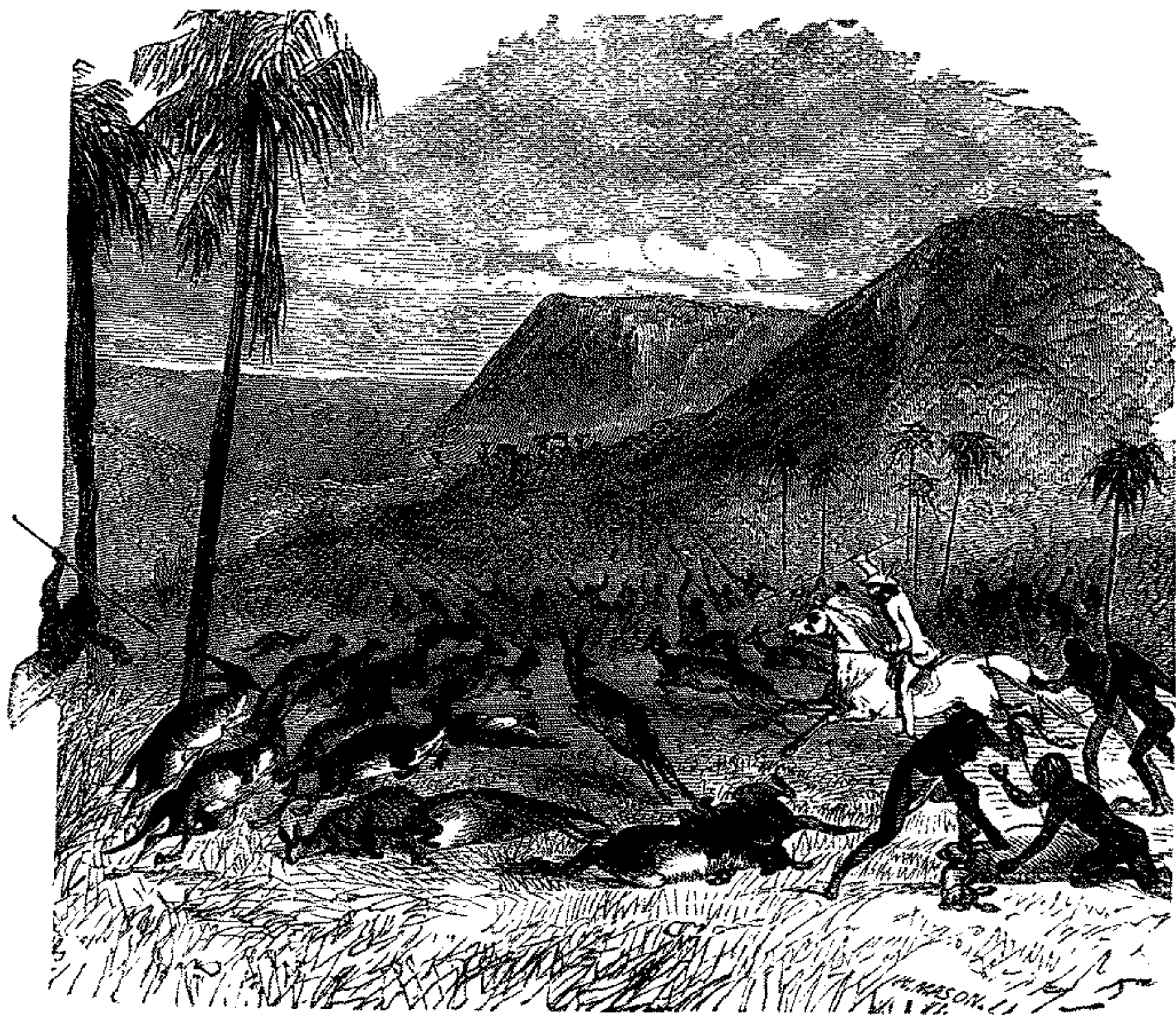
Soon after this, Mr. Ramsay arrived, fully expecting to hear of the loss of sheep and cattle, if not of the huts and pens.

“A diligent servant takes heed of his master’s property, and deserves to be rewarded,” he observed.

“I looked after my wife and children first, sir, though,” said Joseph.

“I should not have praised you if you had not, and it is time that you should have some cattle of your own, and sheep too, and in a few days I will tell you what proportion of the increase of my flocks and herds I can allow you.”

Troloo was now more than ever at the station. He came in, while Mr. Ramsay was there, with the news that a large number of kangaroos were assembled not far off, driven by the fire from their usual feeding grounds. Hearing this, Mr. Ramsay sent over to Mr. Harlow, and a party was made up to hunt them. It was well worth doing so, for though their flesh is not as good as mutton, for each kangaroo killed, two sheep would be saved. Both gentlemen had large dogs trained to hunt them. A kangaroo is a curious animal, with short fore-legs, and very long hind ones, which it doubles up under itself. With these, and the help of a long, heavy tail, it leaps over the ground almost as fast as



THE KANGAROO HUNT.

a horse can gallop. A female kangaroo has a sort of pouch in front, in which she carries her young. On the approach of danger the young one jumps into it, and off she goes. When very hard pressed, however, to save her own life, she will take it out and drop it, and thus go faster over the ground. Two or three other gentlemen and several stockmen from the neighbouring stations joined the party. After they had ridden several miles, Troloo gave notice that they were near the spot. The rifles were got ready, and the party spread out so as to stop the mob from breaking through. The feeding ground was in a large, open space, on the borders of a part

of the bush which had escaped the fire. As the horsemen drew near, the creatures looked up, and seeing their enemies, started off. The dogs were set on and the horsemen followed, firing as they had a chance. Several of the animals were shot, and Sam and Bob boasted that each of them had killed one. They also came upon two emus, to which they gave chase. These are birds with long, thick legs and short wings, which help them along when running before the wind. Their bodies are about half the size of a small Australian sheep. They run at a great rate, so that a horse has hard work to come up with them. Sam's horse was already tired, and they were obliged to give up the chase. As they rode back to join the rest of the party, they saw under the trees what looked like a native hut. On getting nearer they found that a man was inside leaning against the trunk of a tree. They called out, thinking that he was asleep, but he did not answer. Another look showed them that he was dead. The beard and hair were long, and the face like that of a mummy. They turned away from the horrid sight. "Bob, do you know, I believe that the dead man is no other than Tony Peach," said Sam. "We must tell Mr. Ramsay, and he'll come and see. The poor wretch has escaped being hung, which they say he would have been if he had been caught."

They soon reached their friends, and Mr. Ramsay and others came to look at the dead man. They had no doubt who he was. A shallow grave was dug by some of the party, while two others cut

out a slab of wood, on which they cut, with their knives, "Here lies Tony Peach, the bushranger." What became of his misguided mate no one knew.

Tony Peach had started in life with far more advantages than Joseph Rudge, yet how different was the fate of the two men. Joseph and all his family prospered, and he is now, though connected with Mr. Ramsay, the owner of a large flock of sheep and a fine herd of cattle. Tom Wells, who married Sally, has a farm of his own near him. He has bought land for Sam and Bob, on which they both hope to settle before long ; and they are looking out for the arrival of a family of old friends from England, with several daughters, from among whom they hope to find good wives for themselves. No more need be said than this—that the honest, hard-working man who goes to Australia with a family, though he may meet with many ups and downs, may be pretty sure of doing well himself, and of settling his children comfortably around him.



"DICK'S FATHER WAS A HEWER."

LIFE UNDERGROUND;

OR,

DICK THE COLLIERY BOY.

CHAPTER I.

Young Dick Kempson sat all by himself in the dark, with a rope in his hand, at the end of a narrow passage, close to a thick, heavy door. There was a tramway along the passage, for small wagons or cars to run on. It was very low and narrow, and led to a long distance. Young Dick did not like to think how far. It was not built with brick or stone, like a passage in a house, but was cut out; not through rock, but what think you? through coal. Young Dick was down a coal mine, more than one thousand feet below the green fields and trees and roads and houses—not that there were many green fields, by the bye, about there. The way down to the mine was by a shaft, like a round well sunk straight down into the earth to where the coal was known to be. Coal is found by boring, with an iron rod, one piece screwed on above another, with a place in the end to bring up the different sorts of earth it passes through. This shaft was more than a thousand feet deep; some are still deeper. Most people have heard of St. Paul's, the highest church in England; just place three such buildings one on the top of the other, and we have the depth down which young

Dick had to go every day to his work. In the bottom of this shaft, main passages and cross passages ran off for miles and miles to the chambers or places where men were digging out the coal.

The door near which Dick sat was called a trap, and Dick was called a "trapper." His business was to open the trap when the little wagons loaded with coal came by ; pushed, or put, by boys who are therefore called "putters." They bring the coal from the place where the hewers are at work to the main line, where it is hoisted up on the rolleys, or wagons, to be carried to the foot of the shaft. Dick was eleven years old, but he was small of his age, and he did not know much. How should he ? He had passed twelve hours of every six days in the week, for three years of his short life, under ground, in total darkness. He had two candles, but one lasted him only while he passed from the shaft to his trap, and the other to go back again. He had begun to trap at seven years old, and went on for two years, and then the good Lord Shaftesbury got a law made that no little boys under ten years of age should work in mines ; and so he got a year above ground. During that time he went to a school, but he did not learn much, as it was a very poor one.

When he was ten years old, he had to go into the mine again ; he had now been there every day for a year. He had heard talk of ghosts and spirits ; and some of the bigger boys had told him that there was a great black creature, big enough to fill up all the passage, and that he had carried off a good many of

the little chaps, once upon a time, no one knew where, only they had never come back again. Poor little Dick thought that he too might be carried away some day.

Often while he sat there, all alone in the dark, he trembled from head to foot, as he heard strange sounds, cries and groans it seemed. Was it the spirits of the boys carried off, or was it the monster coming to take him away? He dared not run away, he dared not even move. He had been there nine hours, with a short time for meals, when his father had come for him, and he would have to be three more, to earn his tenpence a day. It was Saturday, no wonder that he was sleepy, and, in spite of his fears of ghosts and hobgoblins, that he dropped asleep. He had been dreaming of the black creature he had been told of. He thought he saw him creeping, creeping towards him. He felt a heavy blow on his head. He shrieked out, he thought that it was the long expected monster come to carry him off. It was only Bill Hagger, the putter, with his corve, or basket of coals. An oath came with the blow, and further abuse. Poor little Dick dared not complain. He would only cry and pull open his door, and shut it again directly Bill was through.

Bill Hagger was black enough, all covered with coal dust; but still it was better to have a cuff from him than to be carried off by the big creature, he did not know where, still deeper down into the earth. So he dried the tears which were dropping from his eyes and forming black mud on his cheeks, and

tried to keep awake till the next putter and his loaded corve should come by, or Bill Hagger should return with his empty one.

Bill had not far to go to reach the crane, where the corve would be hoisted on the rolley, or wagon, to be dragged by a pony along the rolley-way to the foot of the shaft. Dick wished that Bill had farther to go, because he was pretty certain to give him a cuff or kick in passing, just to remind him to look out sharp the next time. There was another thing he wished, that it was time for "kenner," when his father would come and take him home to his mother. What "kenner" means, we shall know by-and-by.

I said that there were miles and miles of these rolley or main-tramways. This one was two miles straight, right away from the shaft. As the air in mines gets foul and close, and does not move, it is necessary to send currents of wind into all the passages to blow it away. The first thing is to get the wind to come down the shaft, and then to make it move along certain passages and so up by another shaft. Only a small quantity of wind can come down, and if that was let wander about at pleasure, it would do no good. So these traps or doors are used to stop it from going along some passages, and to make it go along others, till the bad air is blown out of them. To help this, a large furnace is placed at the bottom of the second shaft, called the up-cast shaft, because the foul air is cast up it.

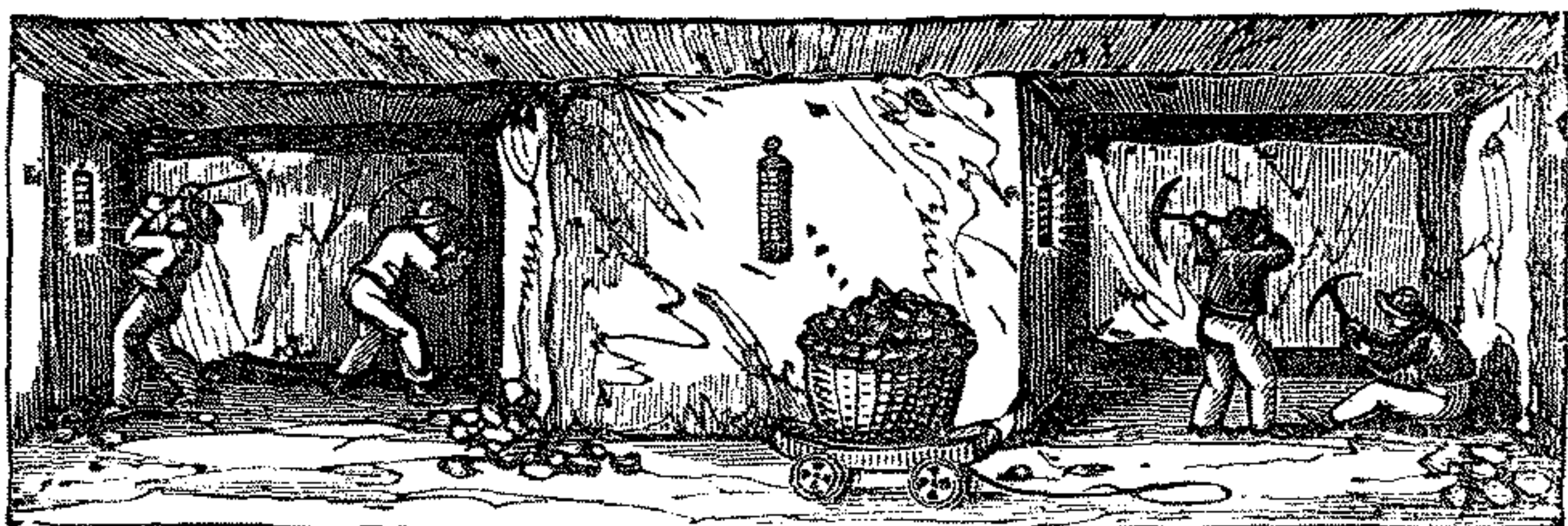
There are several ways of working mines. This **one** was worked in squares, or on the panel system.

The main roads are like the frame of a window; the passages like the wood dividing the panes of glass; and the masses of coal which remain at first like the panes themselves. These masses are again cut into, till pillars only remain about twelve feet by twenty-four. These pillars are at last removed, and props of wood placed instead, so that the whole mine is worked out.

The men who do the chief work in the mine, that is, cut out the coal from the bed or seam, are the "hewers." Dick's father was a hewer. They have only two tools—a short pick, and a round-bladed spade; with a big basket, or "corve," into which they put the coal, and a gauze-wire lantern. Suppose a passage first cut; then they hew out chambers on either side, each about twelve feet wide. The roof of them is propped up as the hewer works on, till all the coal likely to fall is hewn away. The hewer's work is very hard; sometimes he kneels, sometimes sits, and sometimes has to lie on his back or side, knocking away with his heavy pick. Often he is bathed in wet from the heat, for it is very hot down in that black chamber, as the wind cannot pass through it.

In some places, where there is no fear of bad gas, and open lights can be used, the coal is blasted by gunpowder, as rock often is. This, however, cannot often be done; as the bad gas, called fire-damp, may come up any moment, and if set light to, go off like gunpowder or the gas from coal, and blow the chambers and everybody near to pieces.

7



PITMEN FORMING CHAMBERS IN THE COAL.

The cut shows the form of these chambers when the mouth is just being finished. These chambers are in a very wide seam ; but some seams are only three feet thick, and the men can in no part stand upright. When all the chambers and passages are cut out in a panel, the pillars of coal are removed, and pillars of wood put in their stead to support the roof. Some of the main passages run on straight ahead for two miles from the foot of the shaft, and the coal has to be brought all this distance on the rolleys, dragged by ponies or horses sometimes. It might puzzle some people to say how the animals are got down and up again. They are let down in a strong net of ropes, and once down, they do not after see daylight. There are regular stables for them cut out of the coal at the bottom of the mine, and they seem to like the life, for they grow sleek and fat.

In Wallford mine, in which little Dick worked, there were employed 250 grown men, 75 lads, and 40 young boys. The hewer's dress is generally a flannel shirt and drawers, and a pair of stout trousers, a coarse flannel waistcoat and coat, the last

long with pockets, a pair of broggers (worsted stockings without feet), and a leathern cap. These at once get as black as coal-dust can make them.

There are different cranes on the rolley-ways, near the side cuttings, and each is under charge of a lad, called a crane-hoister, whose business is to hoist the baskets brought to him by the putters on to the rolleys, and to chalk down the number he cranes on a board. When the train of rolleys reaches the shaft, the full corves are hoisted up, and empty ones let down, which are placed on the rolleys, and carried back for the hewers to fill.

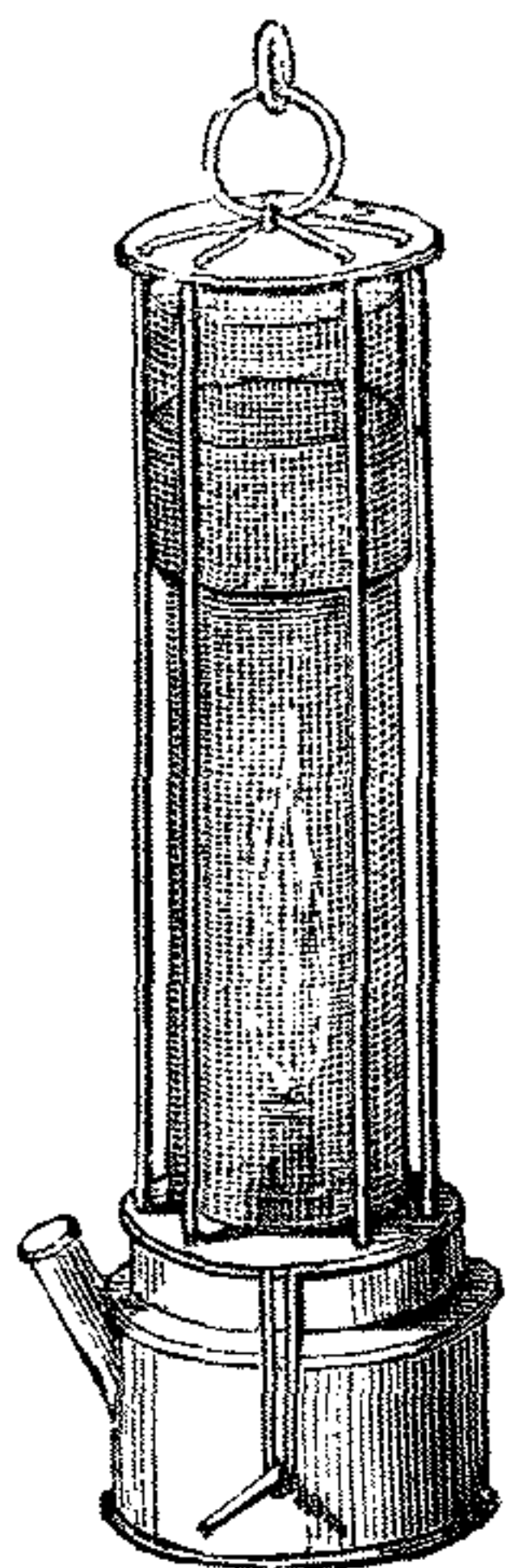
No spirits are allowed in mines, but as the heat and the work makes the people thirsty, tubs of water are placed at intervals, at which they can drink. In their long journeys, the putters stop to "bait," and are well supplied with bread and cheese, and bacon, and cold coffee or tea.

The miner has not only to fear choke or fire-damp, but sometimes water. A mine has, therefore, to be drained. A well or tank is dug in the lowest level, into which all the springs are made to run. A pump is sunk down to it through a shaft with a steam engine above, by which all the water is pumped out.

It may be seen that the working of a mine requires the very greatest care. If this is not taken, the roof may fall in and crush the labourers; or fire-damp may explode and blow them to pieces, and perhaps set fire to the mine itself and destroy it; or black or choke-damp may suffocate them, as the

fumes of charcoal do ; or water may rush in and drown them.

A lamp, invented by a very learned man, Sir Humphrey Davy, is used when there is a risk of fire-damp. It is closely surrounded with very fine wire-gauze, through which neither the flame of the candle nor the gas can pass, yet the light can get out almost as well as through the horn of a common lantern.



SIR
HUMPHREY DAVY'S
SAFETY LAMP.

Before any workmen are allowed to go into the pit in the morning, certain officers, called "over-men" and "deputies," go down through every part that is being worked, to see that all is safe. If anything is wrong, or doubtful, the inspecting deputy places a shovel across the place, or chalks a warning on the blade and sticks it in the ground, that it may be seen by the hewer. As soon as they have found the mine safe, the hewers come down and begin their work ; and when they have had time to fill a corve or so, they are followed by the putters and other labourers. Sometimes it is necessary to work all the twenty-four hours, and then the people are divided into three gangs, who each work eight hours ; but the poor little trappers are divided only into two parties, who have each to be down in the mine twelve hours together, sitting all alone by the side of their traps, like poor little Dick, in the dark.

CHAPTER II.

LITTLE Dick's father, Samuel Kempson, was a hewer. He had not been brought up to the mining work, like most of the men; but once, when there had been a strike among the colliers, he and others from a distant county, being out of work, had got employed, and tempted by the high wages, had continued at it.

While little Dick was sleeping at his trap, and getting a cuff on the head from Bill Hagger, Samuel Kempson was sitting, pick in hand, and hewing in a chamber at the end of a main passage nearly two miles off. The Davy lamp was hung up before him, and the big corve was by his side. There he sat or kneeled, working with his pick, or filling the corve with his spade. Often he thought of the green fields and hedges and woods of his native county. Though his wages had been poor, and his work hedging or ditching, or driving carts, or tending cattle; and though he had been sometimes wet to the skin, and cold enough in winter, yet in summer he had had the blue sky and the warm sun above him, and he had breathed the pure air of heaven, and smelt the sweet flowers and the fresh mown grass, and he sighed for those things which he was never likely to enjoy again. There he was, a hewer of coal, and a hewer of coal he must remain, or run the chance of starving; for he had a large family, and though he had had good wages, three shillings and sometimes four shillings a day, and no rent to pay, and coals for a trifle, he had saved nothing. He had now got into such a

way of spending money that he thought he couldn't save. His wife, Susan, thought so too. She was not a bad wife, and she kept the house clean and tidy enough, but she was not thrifty. Both he and she were as sober and industrious as most people, but they had meat most days, and plenty of white bread, and butter and cheese, and good clothes, and other things, which cost money, so that out of twenty-two shillings a week, there was next to nothing to put by. They had, too, a number of children, and some of them were heavy burdens, and were likely to remain so. The eldest boy, Jack, had had a fancy for the sea, and he had gone away when quite a little chap with a captain who had taken a liking to him, and the vessel had never more been heard of. That was before they left their old home in the country and came to live at the coal pits. Poor Susan often thought of her lost boy, with his laughing blue eyes, and his light hair curling over his fair brow, just as he was when he went away. Mothers are apt to think of their lost young ones. It is well if a parent can feel sure that her child is with God in heaven, that she can say, "I taught it early to love Jesus; I know that he trusted in His cleansing blood, in His all-sufficient sacrifice on the cross."

Poor Susan had not that thought to comfort her, but still it did not trouble her. She mourned her lost boy like a loving mother, but not so much for his sake as because she wished again to fold him in her arms, and press once more a kiss on his cheeks.

Her next boy, Ben, worked with his father in the

pit, as a putter. He was a rough, wildish lad—not worse than his companions, but that was not saying much for him, and it seemed but too likely that he would give his parents trouble.

The third boy, Lawrence, was a helpless cripple. He had been hurt in the mine three years before, and it seemed likely he would never walk again. He went by the name of Limping Lawry among the people in the village of Wallford. I was going to say companions—but he had not many companions, for he could not move about without pain. Only on a summer's day he limped out and sat on a bench against the front wall of the cottage. He was a pale-faced lad, with large blue eyes and a broad forehead, and did not look as if he could be long for this world; yet he lived on while others seemingly stronger were taken away.

Then there was Nelly. Once she was a bright little thing, but she had fallen on her head, and though she did not seem much hurt at first, she became half-witted, and was now an idiot. As she grew older she was sometimes inclined to be mischievous. Lawry might have watched over her, but she was so active and quick that she could easily get away from him. She knew well that it hurt him to move, so she kept her eye on him, and was off like a shot when he got up to go after her. So poor Lawry could not be of much use, even looking after his idiot sister. He used to hope that he might some day get better, and go to work again in the mine, as a trapper, at all events, which did not require much strength.

But the doctor told him that he must not think of it; that the coal dust and bad air would hurt his lungs, and that he would very soon die if he did. If he ever got strong, he must find work above ground.

The Kempsons were decent people, their neighbours could say that of them, but they were not God-fearing and God-loving,—they had no family prayers, no Bible was ever read in their house, and they seldom or never went to a place of worship; to be sure, the nearest was some way off, and that was their excuse—it was hard, if they did, to get back to dinner, at least to a hot dinner, and that is what they always liked to have on Sundays. Such was little Dick's family.

He therefore knew very little about God, or God's love to man through Jesus Christ. How should he? He had nothing pleasant to think of as to what was past nor what was to come. He knew nothing of heaven—of a future life where all sin and sorrow, and pain and suffering is to be done away—of its glories, of its joy, its wonders. All he knew was that he had sat there in that dark corner trapping for many, many weary hours, and that he should have to sit there many more till he was big enough to become a putter. Then he should have to fill corves with coal, and push them along the tramways for some years more till he got to be a hewer like his father. He only hoped that he might have to hew in seams not less than five feet thick—not in three feet or less, as some men had to do, obliged to crawl into their work on hands and knees, and crawl out again, and to work all day

lying down or sitting. But they had light though—that was pleasant; they could move about, and worked only eight hours. He had to work in the dark for twelve hours, and dared not move, so he thought that he should change for the better, that is to say, when he thought at all, which was not often. Generally he sat, only wishing that it was “kenner” time, that he might go home to supper and bed. The name is given, because, when the time for work is over, the banksman at the mouth of the pit cries out, “Kenner, kenner.”

Dick did not get much play, even in summer. In the winter he never saw daylight, except on Sundays. When he was thinking of what might happen, he could not help remembering how many men and boys he had known, some his own playmates—or workmates rather—who had been killed in that and the neighbouring pits. Some had been blown to pieces by the fire-damp; others had been stifled by the choke-damp; a still greater number had been killed coming up and down the shaft, either by the rope or chain breaking, or by falling out of the skip or basket, or by the skip itself being rotten and coming to pieces. But even yet more had lost their lives by the roof falling in, or by large masses of coal coming down and crushing them. Many had been run over by the corves, or crushed by them against the sides, like his poor brother Lawry; and others had been killed by the machinery above ground. “I wonder,” thought Dick, “whether one of those things will be my lot.” Poor little Dick, what be-

tween fancied dangers and real dangers, he had an unhappy time of it. Still he was warm and dry, and had plenty of food, and nothing to do but sit and open a door. Some might envy him.

Dick had one friend, called David Adams, a quiet, pale-faced, gentle little boy, younger than himself. He had only lately come to the mine, and been made a trapper. His father had been killed by the falling in of the roof, and his widowed mother had hard work to bring up her family ; so, much against her will, she had to let little David go and be a trapper. She had never been down a mine, and did not know what sort of a life he would have to lead, or she might not have let him go. Sometimes one man took charge of David and sometimes another, and placed him at his trap,—generally the man who was going to hew in that direction. Miners, though their faces look black on week-days, and their hands are rough, have hearts like other men, and all felt for little David. Often Samuel Kempson took charge of David, and carried him home with him ; and Dick and David used to talk to each other and tell their griefs. David could read, and he would tell Dick all about what he had read on Sundays, and Dick at last said that he should like to read too, and David promised to teach him. At last David lent him some books, and used to come in on Sundays, and in the evenings in summer, to help him read them, and that made them all greater friends than before.

Well, there sat Dick at his trap, very hungry and very sleepy and very tired, and longing to hear

the shout of "Kenner, kenner!" echoing along the passages. He sat on and on; his thoughts went back to the ghosts and spirits he had been told about, and to the tales he had heard of the blowing up of gas, and the sad scenes he had indeed himself witnessed. How dark and silent was all around! Had he dropped asleep? He heard a deep and awful groan. "I am come to take you off, down, down, down," said a voice. Where it came from, Dick could not tell. He trembled from head to foot, trying to see through the darkness in vain, for no cat could have seen down there. Not a ray of the blessed sunlight ever penetrated into those passages. "I'm coming, I'm coming, I'm coming!" said the voice.

"Oh, don't, don't, don't!" cried poor Dick, in a terrible fright.

He felt a big hand placed on his shoulder. "I've got you, young one, come along with me," said the voice.

Dick shrieked out with fear. He trembled all over, and the next moment, just as a loud, hoarse laugh sounded in his ear, he went off in a faint.

"Kenner, kenner, kenner!" was shouted down the pit's mouth, and echoed along the galleries. Samuel Kempson heard it far away, and, crawling out of the hole in which he had been hewing, threw his pick and spade over his shoulder, and took his way homeward, not over pleasant green fields as labourers in the country have to do, but along the dark, black gallery, lighted by his solitary Davy lamp,

which was well-nigh burnt out. He did not forget his boy Dick. He called out to him, but got no reply. Again and again he called. His heart sank within him, for he loved the little fellow, though he made him work in a way which, to others, might appear cruel. Could anything have happened to the child? Once more he called, "Dick, Dick!" Still there was no answer. Perhaps some of the other men had taken him home. He went on some way towards the pit's mouth, then his mind misgave him, and he turned back. To a stranger, all the traps would have looked alike, but he well knew the one at which Dick was stationed. He pushed it open, and there, at a little distance from it, he saw a small heap of clothes. He sprang forward. It was Dick. Was his boy dead? He feared so. The child neither moved nor breathed. He snatched him up, and ran on with him to the foot of the shaft, where several men stood waiting to be drawn up. The rough men turned to him with looks of pity in their faces.

"Anything fallen on the little chap?" asked one.

"Foul air, may be," observed a second.

"Did a rolley strike him, think you?" asked a third.

"I don't know," answered the father; "I can't find where he's hurt. But do let us get up, he may chance to come to in fresh air."

As he spoke, the "skip," or "bowk," used for descending and ascending the shaft, reached the bottom, and Samuel Kempson and his boy were



INTERIOR OF MYNE WITH BASKET DESCENDING.

helped into it, and with some of the other men, began their ascent. The father held the boy in his arms, and watched his countenance as they neared the light which came down from the mouth of the pit; first a mere speck, like a star at night, and growing larger and larger as they got up higher.

An eyelid moved, the lip quivered: "He's alive, he's alive!" he exclaimed joyfully.

As soon as he reached the top, he ran off with Dick in his arms to his cottage.

Mrs. Kempson saw him coming. "What ! another of them hurt ? " she cried out : " God help us ! "

" I don't know," said Kempson ; " the child is very ill, if not dead already. Let us put him to bed and send for the doctor. It's more than you or I can do to cure him of ourselves."

Poor Dick was breathing, and twitching with his hands, but was quite unconscious. His black clothes were taken off him by his mother, who washed and put him to bed, while Samuel went to fetch the doctor attached to the mines. The doctor at once said that something had shaken his nerves, that he must be kept quiet, but well fed and amused. He had had a fright, that was it. Samuel knew the tricks that were played, and he guessed that some one had frightened Dick, and resolved to find out who it was, if he could. The best thing they could do for Dick just then, after he had taken the doctor's stuff, was to send for David Adams to come and amuse him. David, who had just come up from the pit, very gladly came as soon as he had washed, and brought his most amusing books, and he sat and read by Dick's bedside. This did Dick a great deal of good, and while he listened to David's reading, he almost forgot his fright.

The next day, which was Sunday, he was a great deal better, and David came again to spend the day with him. Nobody went from the village to a place of worship, the nearest was some way off, the men

were tired, and the women wanted to tidy their houses. The afternoon was very fine, and while the people were sitting at their doors, or standing about in groups in the dirty, unpaved street, a gentleman came among them with a small bundle of printed papers in his hand.

“Here comes a schoolmaster,” said one. “I wonder now what he wants with us.”

“May be to teach us something we don’t know,” observed a second.

“If he had come to tell us that our wages had risen, I’d have thanked him,” said a third, with a sneer.

“May be he is a parson of some sort,” said Joseph Kempson. “I, for one, should like to hear him, and so would the boys in there. There was a time when never a Sunday passed but what we went to the house of prayer. Now, from one end of the year to the other we are not seen inside one.” Joseph sighed, as he spoke.

The stranger had observed Kempson, and seeing something pleasant in his face, came up and addressed him, “Perhaps you will give me a chair,” he said; “I should like to sit down and read to those who may wish to hear me.”

“Yes, sir, gladly,” answered Kempson, bringing out a chair. “I have a sick boy within; he will hear all you say, as the window is open.”

The gentleman read for a short time, and a good many people came round and listened, and thought what he was reading very interesting. Then he

took out a Bible, and read from that ; and, closing the book, told them of God's great love for man, which made Him send His Son Jesus Christ into the world, first to show men how to live, not to fight and quarrel, but to do good to all around them ; and then, men being by nature sinful, and justly condemned, that He might offer Himself up as a sacrifice, and take their sins upon Himself.

“ My dear friends, trust in this merciful loving Jesus,” he exclaimed. “ He has completed the work of saving you, it is perfect in every way. All you have to do is to repent and trust to Him, and to go and sin no more, intentionally, wilfully that is to say. Oh, my dear friends, think of the love and mercy of God, through Christ Jesus. He never refuses to hear any who come to Him. His love surpasses that of any human being ; His ears are ever open to our prayers.”

“ I should like to have a talk with you, sir,” said Kempson, when the stranger, having finished speaking, was giving his tracts to the people around. “ There are some things which you said, sir, which I haven't heard for a long time, or thought about, but I know that they are true.”

“ Gladly, my friend,” was the answer.

The stranger had a long talk with Joseph, and promised to come again before long to see him.

CHAPTER III.

SEVERAL days passed by, Dick did not seem exactly ill, but he prayed and begged so hard that he might not go back to the pit, that when the doctor came and said also it might do him harm, his father consented not to take him. Still Joseph did not like losing his boy's wages. David had promised, on the next Saturday, as soon as he came back from the pit, to come and read to Dick. When the evening arrived, however, David did not appear. Dick was beginning to complain very much of David, when Mrs. Adams came to ask if he was there, as he had never come home. When Joseph came in, he said that he had not seen him all day. He thought that he had not gone down into the pit. Mrs. Adams began to get into a great fright. David had left home in the morning to go to his work in the pit, and she was sure that he would not have gone elsewhere. When Joseph came in, he undertook to go to the pit's mouth and learn if David had gone down. He came back, saying that there was no doubt about his having gone down, but no one remembered for certain that he had come up again.

"Oh father, let's you and I go down and look for him!" exclaimed Dick; "I feel quite strong and able for it."

"Why I thought you'd be afraid of going down the pit again, boy," remarked Joseph.

"No, father," answered Dick, "I remember what that missionary gentleman said the other day, if we

are doing our duty we shouldn't fear, for God will take care of us ; and I am sure that I should be doing my duty looking after David, who has been so kind to me."

Joseph could say nothing against it ; so as soon as he had had some supper, he, with Dick and Mrs. Adams, set out to find the "doggy"* of the pit, to learn if he knew for certain that David had come up, and if not, to get his and the "butty's" leave to go down and search for him. On their way three or four other men offered to go with them.

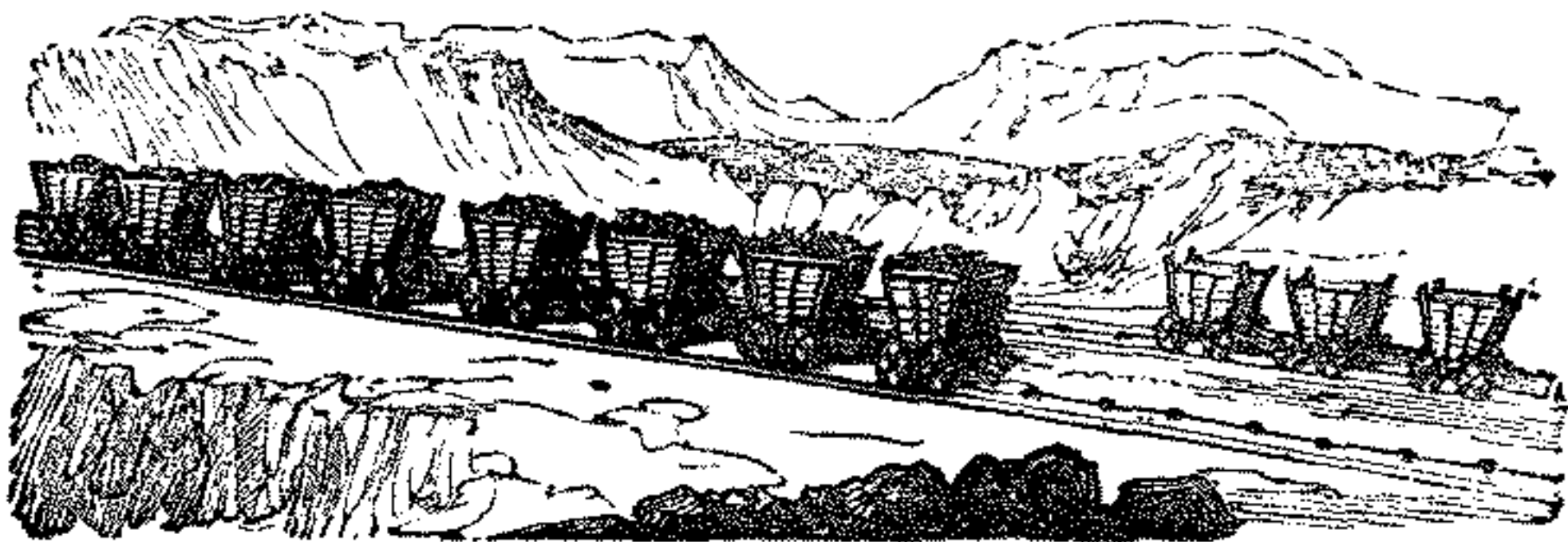
The doggy could not say that David had come up, and the whole party, therefore, were lowered down the pit, except Mrs. Adams ; she sat down near the mouth, waiting anxiously for their return.

While she sat there, a lad dressed as a sailor drew near. He stood still near the mouth of the pit, looking about him. The ground was high ; and he could have seen a long way had it not been for the smoke from hundreds of tall chimneys which every now and then sent out thick wreaths, which hung like a black cloud over the scene.

In the far distance was the large town of Newcastle, also full of tall chimneys, with a cloud of smoke over it. Close to it flows the river Tyne. All around were tall engine houses, out of which came all sorts of curious, dreadful sounds,—groans, and hissings, and whistlings, and clankings of iron ;

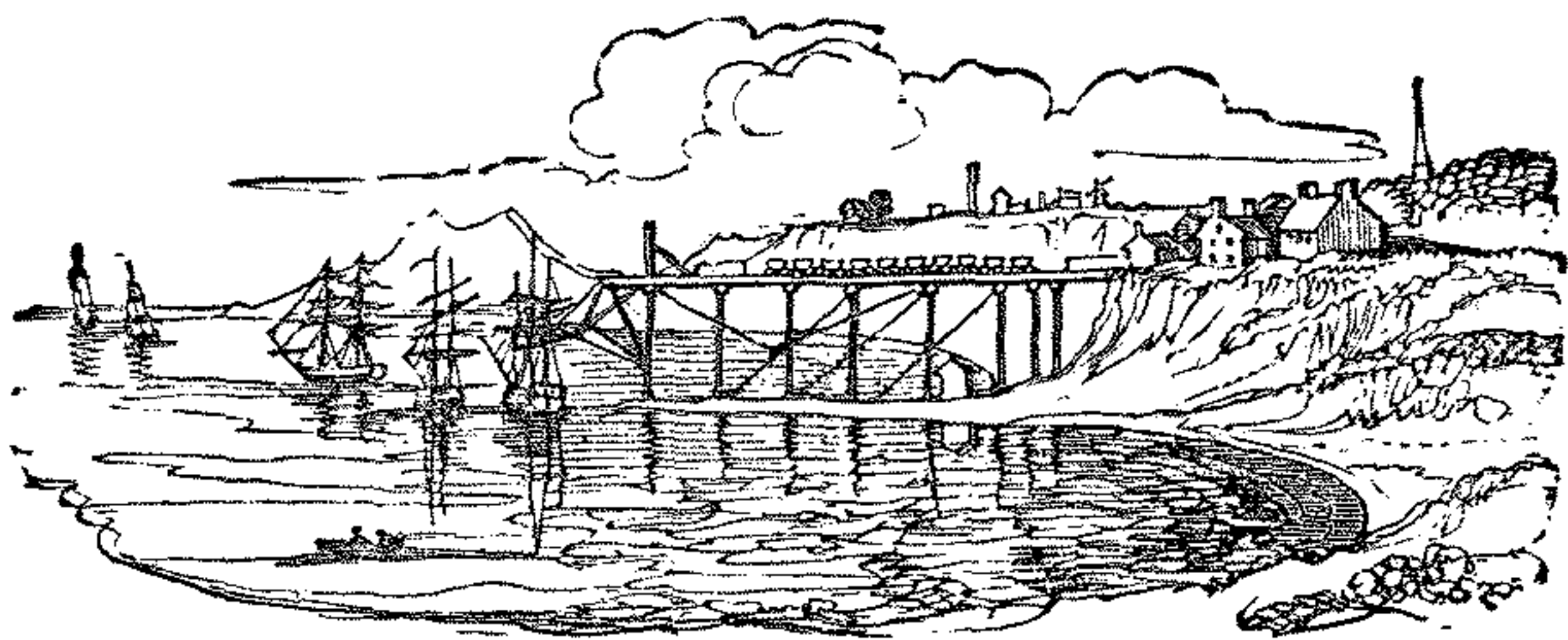
* The "butty" is the head man over all the works, and indeed everything about the pit ; the "doggy" has charge of the underground works, and looks after all the men and boys in the pit.

while high up in the air, stretching out from them, were huge beams like the arms of great giants working up and down in all sorts of ways ; some pumping water out of the mines from the underground streams which run into them, others lifting the baskets of coal out of the shafts, or bringing up or lowering down the miners and other men engaged in the works. The noises proceeded chiefly from the gins, and pulleys, and wheels, and railways ; all busy in lifting the coal out of the pit and sending it off towards the river. The whole country looked black and covered with railway lines, each starting away from one of these great engine-houses which are close to the mouths of the pits. There were rows of small wagons or trucks on them, and as the huge arms lifted up a corve, or basket, it was emptied into the wagon till they were filled, and then away they



INCLINED RAILWAY, WITH LOADED TRAIN OF WAGONS DESCENDING, AND PULLING AN EMPTY TRAIN UP THE DECLIVITY.

started, some of them without engines, down an inclined plane towards the river. Away they went at a rapid rate, and it seemed as if they would be carried furiously over the cliff, or rather the end of a long, high stage into the river. On a sudden, however, they began to go slower ; then they stopped, and one wagon went off by itself from the rest till it got to



SHIPPING COAL FROM A STRAITT OR PLATFORM.

the end of the pier ; then two great iron arms got hold of it, and gently, as if it was a baby, lifted it off the pier and lowered it down till it reached the deck of a vessel lying underneath. When there, the bottom opened and the coals slipped out into the hold of the vessel. Then up the wagon went again, and another came down in the same way, till the whole train was emptied ; then off the wagons set, rolling away to be filled again.

The sailor lad observed poor Mrs. Adams's anxious, eager looks.

“What is the matter now, mother ?” he asked, going up to her, and speaking in a kind tone. “You seem downhearted at something.”

“Yes ; well I may be, my lad, when my little son, as good and bright a child as ever lived, has been and got lost down in the pit. He went down at day-break this morning, and no one has ever seen him since. Such a dreadful place, too, full of dark passages and pits and worked-out panels ; and then there is the bad gas, which kills so many ; and then there are the rolleys, and many a poor lad has got run over with them. Oh dear, oh dear !”

“ Well, mother, I hope the lad will be found,” said the young stranger. “ I didn’t think the place was like that ; may be you’ll tell me something more about it.”

The poor widow was too glad to have some one to talk to, so she told the lad all about the mine, the number of hours the boys worked, and the wages they got, and the way they were treated generally. The young sailor thanked her heartily. “ I thought as how I’d been forced to lead something like a dog’s life at sea, and I had a mind to come and have a turn at mining ; for thinks I to myself, I’ll have a dry jacket and plenty of grub, and a turn in to a quiet bed every night, but now I hear what sort of work it is, I’ll go back to the old brig ; we’ve daylight and fresh air and change of scene, and though we are dirty enough at times, I’ll own we haven’t to lie on our backs and peck away at coal in a hole three feet high, with the chance of being blown to pieces any moment.”

“ I can’t say that you are wrong, my lad,” said the poor widow, looking up at the sailor. “ It has been a fatal calling to those belonging to me, and I would advise no one to enter it who has any other means of living.”

“ Thank ye, mother, thank ye,” answered the stranger, “ I’ll take your advice, but I should like to know if they find that poor boy of yours ; I hope they will, that I do.” The sailor could not stop any longer, as it was getting late ; but he asked the widow where she lived, that he might come back and learn

if her son was found. Then off he set, running as hard as he could go, to get back to the high-road, by which he might reach the river before it was dark.

Meantime Dick and his father and the other men went down the pit with their lamps, to look for David. "It's like hunting for a needle in a rick of hay, I'm thinking," said one of the men. "If we could learn what way the little fellow was going when he was last seen ; you know there are more than sixty miles of road, taking all into account, and it will be a pretty long business to walk over them."

"Right, mate, but the poor boy won't have got very far," observed Joseph Kempson. "Come along now."

The men hurried on along the dark, low galleries. Dick every now and then shouting out with his young, shrill voice, "David, David Adams !"

But there was no answer. It was a work of danger too ; for they had to pass along several passages in which the air felt very heavy, and they knew well that if it had not been for their Davy lamps they would all have been blown to pieces. They called and called, and looked into every dark corner, still David was not to be found. The men began to talk of giving up the search as a bad job. "Oh don't let us give up, father," exclaimed Dick, "David must be somewhere." Joseph liked little David, but still he was tired, and he thought, with the other men, that they might hunt on for a week and yet not find him. However, they all agreed to take another long round.

The poor widow sat and sat, anxiously waiting the return of her friends.

The banksman at the mouth of the pit received the signal from those below that they were ready to be drawn up. It was now quite dark. "Stay quiet, dame, stay quiet," he said, as the poor widow was about to lean over the mouth of the pit to watch for her boy. "May be, after all, the lad isn't there. I've known boys lost for many a day down the pits, and yet found at last."

Little Dick with his father and the other men were soon at the top. As they one after the other got out of the basket, the poor widow eagerly advanced with out-stretched arms to clasp her son. "Oh my boy, my boy, where are you? Come, David, come!" she exclaimed.

"Very sorry, Mrs. Adams, very sorry; but we couldn't find the little chap," said Samuel Kempson, in a tone which showed that he felt what he said. The other men echoed his words. "Still it's better to come without him than to bring him up as many have been brought up, as you well know, without life in him. Don't give way now, we'll try again, and more than likely that he'll find his way back to where people are at work."

The widow heard some deep sobs. They came from Dick. "You're a kind, good lad; you loved my boy," she cried, pressing him to her, and giving way to bitter tears.

"And I will go down and look for him again, that I will, Mrs. Adams; so don't take on so, now," answered Dick, stopping his own sobs.

Samuel insisted on the widow coming to his house. She, after some pressing, consented, and the men assisted her along in the dark towards the village. They may have been rough in looks and rough in language, but the widow's grief softened their hearts and made them kind and gentle in their manner. Mrs. Kempson received the poor widow with much kindness, and did her best to comfort her.

They did little else all the evening but talk of little David and what had become of him. Mrs. Kempson recollecting what her own son had done, observed that perhaps he had come up after all, and had gone away to Newcastle, or Shields, to get on board ship.

“Oh no, no, my David would never have gone away from me,” exclaimed Mrs. Adams; yet, as she said this, hope came back to her heart, for he might perhaps have thought that he was going off to make his fortune, and that if he came to her first she might prevent him. “Alack, alack, there's little wisdom in young heads. May be he's gone that way, Mrs. Kempson,” she said at last, and the thought seemed to bring some comfort to her.

All appeared to agree with her except Dick. He was sure that David would not have gone away without, at all events, hinting his intention to him.

The next day was Sunday, when no mines are worked. Dick, in spite of his fears of bogies, had made up his mind to go and search for his friend alone if he could get no one to go with him. He

thought perhaps the butty would let him go down with his Davy lamp. He would fill his pockets with bits of paper and drop them as he went along, so as to find his way back, and to know where he had been over before. He had got several old newspapers to tear up, and he would take a stick with him, and a basket of food, and a bottle of beer, and he would go into every nook and passage of the mine till he had found his friend. Dick's were brave thoughts. He fancied that he should have foes of all sorts to fight with, but for the sake of his friend he made up his mind to meet them.

CHAPTER IV.

THE next day was Sunday, when the missionary again came to the village, and did not fail to visit Samuel Kempson's cottage. He heard of the disappearance of David Adams. He pointed out the only source from which the sorrowing mother could obtain comfort, and besought all those present to turn at once to the Lord. He reminded them that any moment they might all be hurried into eternity. He asked each man present to say how many friends of his had been cut off on a sudden—how many had died unprepared—and then begged them to tell him if they were ready to leave the world; and if they were not ready, when would they be ready? “Do not delay, do not delay, my friends,”

he said, in a voice which went to the hearts of many of his hearers.

Among them was Samuel Kempson. From that day he became a serious-minded man, while he did his best to show by his life that his heart was changed. Others again listened, but went away and continued in the same bad habits in which they had before indulged.

Dick was eager for Monday morning, when the pit would be again at work, that he might go and look for David. Long before daybreak he was on foot on his way to the pit's mouth. He had to wait, however, till the under-viewers and deputy over-men had gone down to see the condition of the pit, whether it was fit for people to work in, or whether any stream of bad air had burst out likely to kill or injure any one. At last the mine was reported safe, and Dick, and the other boys, and several of the men were allowed to descend. Dick eagerly inquired of the deputy over-men if they had seen anything of David. No ; they did not even think that he was in the pit, was their reply. Dick remembered that the missionary had said "that those who trust in God and do right need fear no evil." "That's what I am doing," he said to himself, as he took his Davy's lamp from the lamp-room, and grasped his stick. "I don't fear the black bogies or any other creatures such as Bill Hagger is so fond of talking about. May be, as the missionary says, there are no such things, and David thinks that it was Bill Hagger himself who

frightened me." With such thoughts, brave little Dick strengthened his mind, and braced up his heart as he walked on.

From the gate-road, or chief gallery, roads opened off on either side. Dick made up his mind to go to the farthest end, and then to work down one side, shouting as he went along, and then the other, dropping his bits of paper. He walked as fast as he could, but to move along with a mass of rock and earth and coal a thousand feet thick overhead, is not like walking across the green fields with the blue sky above one, and the fresh air blowing, and the sun shining, and the birds singing. Dick had only walls of coal on either side, or pillars of coal, or caves out of which the coal had been hewn, or the mouths of other long passages, some leading upwards, some downwards to other levels. He had a black roof of rock above him, and black ground under his feet. "Anybody seen anything of David Adams?" he asked of the different gangs of pushers, hoisters, or thrusters he met with their trucks of coal as they came out of the passages and holes on all sides, some so low that they had to stoop down till their heads were no higher than the trucks.

"No; what, is he not found yet?" was the answer he got generally.

It took him nearly half an hour to get to the end of the gate-road. When he reached thus far, he took the first opening to the right, and began dropping his paper, and calling out his friend's name. He went on and on, expecting to get into another

gate-road, and in time to reach the main shaft. How long he had been walking he could not tell, when he found himself in a deserted part of the mine. It was like a large, low hall, the roof supported by stout pieces of timber, called "sprags," in some places, and in others by "cogs," or lumps of coal, or by pillars of coal. It was necessary here to be more careful than ever in strewing the paper, or it might be long indeed before he could find his way out again. He thought of poor David ; how, if he had got here, he might have wandered about round and round, like a person lost in a wood, and sunk down overcome at last, and not able to rise up again. He could not altogether get over either fears for himself. His lamp shed a very dim light, and that only to a short distance, and he thought he saw dark forms moving about here and there, sometimes stopping and looking at him, and then going on again. He, like a true hero, had braced up his nerves to brave everything he might meet, or he would have shrieked out, and tried to run away. He, however, stoutly kept on his way, uttering a prayer that if they were evil spirits, they might do him no harm. Still he, as before, cried out David's name ; but there was no answer.

His heart at length began to sink within him ; a faintness came over him. He had got a long, long way from the shaft, and he had hoped before this to find his friend. His legs ached, too, for he had been for a long time wandering about. He sat down at last on a block of coal and thought

over what he should do. Nothing should make him give up the search; that he was determined on. Then he remembered that his lamp would not last much longer; so he got up, and pushed on. He had need of all his courage, for when he stopped he thought that he heard sighs and groans and distant cries. He had often before trembled at hearing such sounds, thinking that they were made by the evil spirits or hobgoblins of whom Bill Hagger had told him. Now, after a moment's thought, he knew that they were caused by the wind passing through a trap either not well closed or with a slit in it. He could not open his lamp to see how much oil remained in it, and as he could only guess how long he had been walking, he could not tell what moment he might find the light go out.

He hurried on; he thought that he was in the right way. He was getting near a gate-road, when a moaning sound reached his ear. He stopped that he might be sure whence it came. Then he walked on cautiously towards the place, stopping every now and then to be sure that he was going in the right way. Again he heard the moaning sound. It was like that uttered by a person in pain. He followed it till he got to the mouth of a narrow passage, which had been begun, but did not seem to run far. Suddenly the idea came on him that these sounds were made by one of the much-dreaded bogies. "If it is one of them creatures, he can't do me any harm, for I'm doing what is right," he said to himself, and

boldly went in, holding his lamp before him. He had not gone far, when he saw stretched out before him on the ground the form of his young friend. He had his arms extended, as if he had fallen groping his way.

“O David, David, come to life : do now !” cried Dick, kneeling down by his side.

David uttered a low groan ; that was better than if he had been silent. So, encouraged by this, Dick lifted him up, and poured a few drops of beer down his throat. The liquid revived him ; not from its strength, however.

“Come out of this place, David, do now ; the air is very bad and close, you’ll never get well while you stay here.”

David at last came round enough to know what was said to him, and with Dick’s help was able to crawl into the gate-road, which was not far off. Here the fresher air, for fresh it was not, brought him still more round, and he sat up and eat some of the food which Dick had brought. David kept staring at Dick all the time he was eating without saying a word, as if he did not know what had happened.

“Come along now, David,” said Dick, at last ; “there is no time to lose, for the lamp may be going out, and it won’t do to have to find our way to the shaft in the dark.”

“Oh no, no. How did you find me, Dick ?” asked David.

“Come to look for you,” answered Dick.

“And how is poor mother? She must have been in a sad way all these days, thinking what had become of me.”

“Mrs. Adams bears up pretty well,” said Dick.

“But how long do you think I have been down here? A week, or is it longer?” said David.

He could scarcely believe that it had been from the Saturday morning till the Monday evening since he was lost.

“I thought that I must have been down very many days,” he remarked. “I had my day’s dinner with me, so I just took a little nibble of food for breakfast, and another for dinner, and a little more for supper. It seemed to me that I stopped five or six hours between each meal, and then I lay down and went to sleep, and when I awoke I thought it was morning, and that the people would be coming down to work; so I got up and walked on, thinking that they would hear me; but I waited and waited, there was not the sound of a pick anywhere near, and I knew that there would be no use shouting. Once I found the air much cooler, and as I looked up I saw the stars shining right overhead, and then I knew that I must be under an air shaft. Now, I thought, I shall find the road to the pit’s mouth, but I turned the wrong way, I suppose, and at last, when I could go on no longer, I went right into the hole where you found me. I couldn’t have been long there. I tried to cry out as loud as I could, but I had no strength; and if you hadn’t come, Dick, I should have died before many minutes.”

David gave this account of himself by fits and starts, as he and Dick were trying to find their way into the chief gate-road. Dick had to support his friend, who was very weak, and scarcely able to get along. He himself, too, was ready to faint, for he had been walking some hours, and that in a hot mine was very trying. For what they could tell they might still have a long distance to go. They went on for some way, then again they had to sit down and rest.

“Now, David, we must go on again,” exclaimed Dick, rousing himself; “we shall soon be where the hewers are at work.”

“Oh, I cannot, I cannot move another step, I fear,” answered David, in a voice which showed how weak he had become.

Dick made him take a little more food, and then, putting his arm round him, helped him along. Thus they went on for some distance.

“Hark !” exclaimed Dick, joyfully, “I hear the sound of a pick. Yes, I’m sure of it. There is some one singing, too. It’s a putter. He’s coming this way.”

As he spoke, the dull sound of the pick, “thud, thud, thud,” reached their ears. With their spirits raised they were again going on, when out went Dick’s lamp. They were in complete darkness. Not a glimmer of light came from where the other men were at work. Dick shouted as loudly as he could to draw attention. As to David, his voice could not help much. No one attended to them. They stumbled on for some time farther.

“ I know that voice. It’s Bill Hagger, I’m sure,” said Dick. “ I’ve often heard him sing that song ; I would rather it had been any one else, but I don’t think he would ill-treat us now.”

Dick shouted to Bill to come with his light. Just at that moment while they were waiting for Bill’s answer, there was a loud, thundering crash, with a fearful shriek and cries for help.

“ The roof has fallen in, and Bill is buried under it. Oh, let us push on, and see if we cannot help him out,” cried Dick.

The two boys had groped their way on for some distance, when they saw far off the glimmer of a light.

“ That must be Bill’s lantern,” said Dick. “ He must have set it down before the roof fell in on him.”

Bill had ceased shrieking, but they could hear his groans.

They at last reached the spot. A large mass of coal had fallen, and shut him up in a side passage. Part of it must have fallen on him. The boys, weak as they were, in vain tried to lift the big lumps of coal off the young man. They soon saw that they might very likely, in so doing, bring down more on their own heads, and that it would be better to hurry on to get help. Dick entirely forgot all the ill-treatment he had received from Bill, and overcoming the fatigue he had been feeling, ran on, with the help of Bill’s lamp, towards the place where he expected to find men at work, dragging poor David along with

him. He felt David growing heavier and heavier. At last, without uttering a sound, down he sank by his side. Was he really dead? He held the light to his friend's pale face. He breathed. There was only one thing to be done. He dragged him to the side of the gallery, out of the way of any rolley, which might by chance come by, and ran on to where he thought he heard some men at work. He shouted out. The first man who appeared was his father. He told him that he had found David.

“What alive?” asked Samuel.

“Yes, father; but he won't be if we don't make haste; and besides him there is Bill Hagger, with a heap of coals over him.

On hearing this, Samuel Kempson called all the men near to go to the assistance of David and Bill, while one ran to summon a deputy viewer to direct what was to be done to release Bill. As soon as they reached David, Samuel lifted him up in his arms, and hurried with him to the foot of the shaft, accompanied by Dick. When he got there, he begged that he might be drawn up at once, that he might take the boy to his mother. They got into the corve, and were drawn up, up, up the deep shaft. When they reached the mouth of the pit, the fresh air brought back the colour to David's cheeks, and he opened his eyes for a moment, but quickly shut them, dazzled by the rays of the sun which was trying to pierce the murky atmosphere. This, however, showed that there was

some life in the boy; and in better spirits than at first, Samuel hurried along to the widow, that he might restore her son to her. She had been over and over again to the pit's mouth to inquire for her boy, and had to go back to look after her other children.

One of them playing in front of the door, saw the Kempsons coming along: "Here comes Dick Kempson and his father with a little dead boy in his arms," cried the child.

The poor widow, her heart sinking with dread, ran out of the cottage, expecting to see David's lifeless body.

"Here he is, Mrs. Adams, all right," exclaimed Samuel, as he drew near. The change from grief to joy, as she saw her boy stretching out his arms towards her, was almost too much for her strength, and she burst into tears as she took him from Kempson and pressed him to her bosom. When she recovered a little, she began to pour out her thanks to Samuel—

"Oh don't thank me, Mrs. Adams, it was Dick found your boy, and if it had not been for him, he would have died—no doubt about that," answered Samuel.

"And I should have been very, very sorry, if I hadn't found him, that I should Mrs. Adams," said Dick quietly. "You know what friends we are. Now I dare say he would like to have a wash and go to bed."

"Thank ye, Dick—I would, mother," murmured

David, who by this time had been brought into the house and placed in a chair.

“I would give him a little broth or tea, Mrs. Adams, and he’ll come all right soon,” said Samuel, as he and his son left the cottage to return to the mine.

“Bless you, bless you, my boy,” said the widow, as she watched Dick from the window for a moment : and she didn’t say those words with her mouth only, but with her whole heart.

Samuel would have sent Dick home, but he begged that, though he was tired, he might go back to learn how it had fared with poor Bill Hagger.

“But I thought that Bill Hagger was one of your greatest enemies. He seemed always to be ill-treating you,” observed Samuel.

“So he did, father,” answered Dick. “But don’t you mind what the missionary said the other day ? ‘We should love our enemies and do good to them that despitefully use us and hate us.’”

“So he did, Dick, to be sure ; and I’ve often thought since then, what a hard matter it must be to do it.”

“He said that we must pray for God’s help and grace, father, and that then we shall be able to do what now seems so hard,” was Dick’s answer.

On reaching the bottom of the shaft, and going on a little way, they met some men carrying Bill Hagger, who had been got out from under the coal, but so

dreadfully mangled, that it did not seem possible he could live.

Samuel now went back to work with his pick, and Dick returned to the charge of his trap.

CHAPTER V.

Day after day Dick sat by the side of his trap, all in the dark and by himself, opening and shutting it, as the corves and rolleys came by, and Samuel worked away as usual with his pick and spade. Though not as strong as many of the other hewers, he made as much as any one else by keeping at his work. The missionary continued to come to the village occasionally on the Sunday, but many of the men were absent that day, or would not come to hear. He was a man very earnest in his work. His great object was so to preach the gospel, that his hearers might understand and accept the offers it makes. He therefore considered how he might best get the ears of all the people in the district. Few men, knowing the dangers of a coal mine, would go down a second time for pleasure; but hearing that all the labourers collected in one place to eat their meals, he got leave to go down to read the Bible and preach to them all that time. They understood from this that he really wished to do them good; and in the course of a week or two there were very few who did not try to attend to what he said. Some few did much more than that, they repented—they turned to

Christ--they put their whole trust in Him. Happy was it for those few who did so.

Dick was now becoming a biggish boy, and he hoped soon to be made a putter. He did not like the work a bit more than before. He could not help thinking of the green fields he remembered playing in when he was a little boy, and he ofttimes sighed for them; but his parents wanted him to work in the mines, and so it was his duty to stay on where he was. At last he was made a putter, and had, with two other boys, to push and pull along the rolleys. He had been about a week at the work, when one day, as he was going ahead of a laden rolley, he slipped, and before those behind saw what had happened, the rolley went over his foot. He shrieked out, for the pain was very great, and it seemed as if his foot was smashed to pieces. "I shall be a cripple all my life, like poor Lawry; oh dear, oh dear!" was his first thought.

His companions put him on the rolley and took him to the foot of the shaft. He was soon drawn up to the pit's mouth, when the banksman got two men to carry him home on a stretcher, and sent for the doctor.

"Oh, Dick, Dick, what is the matter? Another of my boys a cripple!" cried poor Mrs. Kempson, when the men brought him in and placed him on his bed.

Dick could scarcely speak for the pain.

"Don't know, mother. Hope not," he could just murmur out.

"Was there ever so unfortunate a woman as I

am ? my poor boy ! my poor boy ! ” she cried, trying to cut off Dick’s boot and stocking, which was covered with blood.

The doctor came at last, and said that he was afraid it would be a long time before Dick could use his foot ; but that, if he took care, he might recover entirely.

Samuel, who had been hewing at the end of a long gallery far away from the foot of the shaft, only heard of the accident to his boy on his way home. Once he would have grumbled very much. Now he only thought of poor Dick’s pain, and not at all of the loss of his wages, and the additional mouth he would have to feed. Dick was more sorry for his father and mother than for himself. David came, whenever he could, to see him, and he amused himself by cutting out models, as he did when he was ill before. He could now also read well, but he and David had read through and through all their books and the tracts which the missionary had left them. They were therefore very thankful when he came again ; and hearing how much Dick wanted books, left them several nice magazines. Some had beautiful pictures. Neither Dick nor David had ever seen anything which they thought so fine. When Dick heard from the missionary that the pictures were made from carvings on blocks of wood, he said that he should like to learn so curious an art. The missionary, seeing this, explained how it was done ; and Dick forthwith drew a rolley on a block, and cut away all the white wood between the lines. Then

he rubbed over the raised parts with lamp black, and pressed it down on a piece of white paper. There, to his delight, was the drawing of a rolley. It was not very well done, but Lawry and David thought a great deal of it.

The missionary smiled when he saw it. "A very good beginning, my boy. Persevere, and it may be that you may make some use of your talent in this way," he observed.

Dick had not, however, learned to do much better before the doctor said that he thought his foot was healed enough to let him go to work in a few days. Dick was eager to go at once, but Samuel said that he must stay at play a few days longer. Dick had no love for his task in the pit, but he felt that as he was fed he ought to work as soon as he could. At last it was arranged that Dick should go to work the next Monday.

Samuel kissed his younger children, as he was about to start with his eldest boy to his work.

"We'll have you with us, Dick, all right and strong next week. You are to be a half-marrow, I hear. Well, it's better than sitting at a trap all day." He said, as he went out, looking back with a pleasant smile, "Good-bye, all."

"He's a kind father, and he is much kinder and gentler than he used to be before the missionary came," thought Dick, as Samuel disappeared round the corner of the street.

Samuel Kempson went on his way to the pit's mouth, where a number of other men collected,

ready to go down as soon as the banksman called them.

It was a fine morning; the sun was just rising in the clear sky out from the far-off sea. Samuel drew a breath of the pure morning air, and gazed round at the blue sky and glorious sun, as he stepped off into the corve, in which, with many others, he was to descend the shaft. Bill Hagger, who had completely recovered from his accident, and was now a hewer, was among his companions. Bill, unhappily, was not among those who willingly listened to the missionary. He was the same rough, coarse being as before, a constant visitor at the ale-house, a fearful swearer, and ready at all times for any mischief. There were too many like him.

Samuel and the others having got their picks newly sharpened, and their spades, went to the lamp-house for their lamps. These were handed to them, carefully locked, so that they might not open the lamp and expose the flame to the surrounding air. They were driving a new gallery, and as a good deal of fire-damp was likely to come out, it was necessary to be very careful.

Samuel passed David Adams, who was still a trapper, on his way to his trap. David asked after Dick.

“He’ll be down with us in a few days, I hope,” was the answer, in a cheerful tone.

Nearly two hundred human beings were toiling away down in those long, narrow passages. Some with pickaxes were getting out the huge lumps of coal

from the solid vein, others were breaking them up and shovelling them into the baskets. The putters were dragging or pushing the baskets towards a main road, where they were received by the "crane-hoister," who, with his crane, lifted them on the rolley-wagons. These were dragged along a tramway by sleek, stout ponies to the foot of the shaft, under charge of a wagoner.

Other men were engaged at the foot of the shaft, hooking on the corves full of coal to be drawn up by the machinery above. There were three shafts. At the bottom of one was a large furnace kept always burning that it might assist to draw down the pure air from above and send the bad air upwards. Down another shaft was a huge pump, pumping up the water which got into the mine. The third shaft was that by which the men chiefly went up and down, and the coals were drawn up, though the furnace shaft could also be used for that purpose. There were men to tend the furnaces, and stable-men to look after the horses, and lamp-men, and blacksmiths to sharpen the tools and mend the iron-work of the wagons, and rolley-way-men to keep the roads in order, besides several for other sorts of jobs. All these were busy working away at their several posts. Samuel Kempson was among the hewers farthest from the main shaft. Near him was Bill Hagger. They had been working for some hours when the welcome sound of blows on the trap-doors told them that dinner and drink time had arrived. Leaving their tools, they unhooked the lamps, which hung on nails above their

heads, and hastened to the drink place, an open space to which their dinners were brought from the shaft on rolleys, chiefly in basins done up in handkerchiefs, each having his proper mark. Some had the first letters of their names, others bits of different coloured cloth, others buttons. Each man having found his dinner, took his seat, when Samuel became aware that his friend the missionary was present. He was standing with his back to the wall, and some candles fixed to a tree, or support, near him. All were silent. Having read a chapter in the Bible, the missionary earnestly entreated them to seek the Lord while He might be found. It was an impressive discourse, and the missionary himself had often cause to think of it afterwards. The dinner-time was soon over, and the labourers hastened back to their work, and the missionary returned to the world above.

Kempson had been pecking away for some time, when Bill Hagger, who was next to him, ceased working. "I want my blow of baccy," he said, coming up to Samuel. "That missioner chap put me off it, and that's what I won't stand, so I'm going to have it now."

"What can make you think of such a mad thing, Bill?" exclaimed Samuel, "You know it's against orders to light a pipe, and good reason too, for a spark might blow us all to pieces in a moment. I smell the fire-damp at this moment, you haven't got matches, I hope?"

"No; but I've got a key to open my lamp," an-

swered Bill, producing a small key from a concealed pocket.

“Don’t be mad, Bill,” cried Kempson, “You know that you’ve no business to have that key. As sure as you open your lamp you’ll blow yourself and me into bits, and may be everybody in the mine, for I never felt it fuller of gas than it is to-day. Just think, Bill, where our souls are to go ; for the gas can’t blow them to pieces, remember that.”

“I’m not going to be put off by any of your talk,” answered Bill, in a surly tone, filling his pipe.

Having done so, before poor Kempson could stop him, he had opened his safety lamp, and put in the bowl of his pipe to light it. In an instant there was a fearful report, a sheet of fire flew along the galleries here, there, and everywhere through the pit, bursting open the traps, tearing off huge fragments of the coal, overthrowing pillars and supports, and sweeping to destruction the helpless human beings it overtook in its course. Those more distant from the first part of the explosion heard it coming, and knew too well its dreadful import. They tried to fly towards the foot of the shaft. There only could they hope for safety ; but what hope had they of reaching it with those fiery blasts rushing through every roadway and passage, and the destructive choke-damp rising rapidly on all sides ?

David Adams was sitting at his trap ready to open it, for he heard a gang of putters coming along, when a loud, deafening roar sounded in his ears. The door was shaken violently, but resisted the

shock, though he felt the hot air coming through the crevices. Loud cries arose on every side from the neighbouring passages. The putters rushed on, leaving their wagons, and forced open the trap. David, seizing his lamp, rushed out with them. His first impulse was to cover up his head with his coat, then to draw his comforter over his mouth and nose, for he already smelt the too-well-known stench of the choke-damp. Some of his companions, in their fright, turned the wrong way. He and others pushed on towards the shaft. They had not gone far when they came upon several men, some had fallen, overcome by the choke-damp; others were sitting down, pointing, with looks of terror, at a mass of brick-work which had fallen in, stopping their advance; while through it came a stream of gas, which it was clear would soon fill the passage. The stench was every moment growing stronger and stronger. "We must go back, we must go back," was the cry from those still able to move.

There was another way to the shaft, through the passage at which David had been placed. Some of the stronger men led the way, the putters went next, and David was last. Before they could reach the passage, for which they were aiming, the main way was filling rapidly with choke-damp. Now one of the men leading fell, now another, and the rest had to pass over their bodies. To stop to try and help them would have been to give up their own lives without doing any good. David saw several of the putters, strong, hearty lads, drop down by his side, while he

was able to keep on from having his mouth covered up, and from attempting to breathe only where the air seemed purest.

The survivors, a small party only, now reached the end of the passage, and ran on, driven on by the air, which was rushing along it. There was hope for them in that direction if no fresh explosion should take place. But the danger was still very fearful. The fire-damp might any moment find the broken lamp of a dying man, and explode, causing further destruction on every side. On the men sped ; now one, now another dropped. The remainder still pressed on. There were a hundred yards or more between them and the foot of the shaft. It seemed a vast distance to go over, when any moment the whole mine might be a sea of fire. Even there safety might not be found.

Hitherto young David had been preserved, but now he felt his strength failing. The hot air was coming up behind. He sprang forward, he thought that he was near the shaft. Cries, and groans, and loud, roaring, hissing sounds were in his ears. All thought and feeling passed from him. Not a human voice was heard throughout the long galleries and passages of the mine, lately so full of active life. The bodies of the men were there charred and withered, and the only sound was the roar of the escaping gas, as it caught fire and exploded in the far-off passages of the mine.

CHAPTER VI.

DICK had wandered out in the afternoon to get a little more of the fresh air than he could find in the hot street of the village. Not that there was what would be called fresh air in other parts of the country. Even the purest air was full of smoke and coal-dust and gas. He sat himself down to rest on a stone wall, and his eye wandered over the scene. There were the tall chimneys sending forth wreaths and clouds of smoke, and the odd shaped buildings, and the cranks and the beams moving up and down without ceasing, as if they could never get tired, and the railways in all directions, with train after train of coal wagons moving rapidly over them, some loaded, and others flying back empty from whence they came. He had been sitting there for some time, when he saw, by the way that people were running towards the pit's mouth, that something was wrong. He got up, and as fast as his lame foot would let him, hurried in the same direction. Too soon he learned what had happened. There had been a fearful explosion. The corve, or basket, by which the men went up and down the shaft, had been knocked to pieces, and even the machinery over the pit had been injured. Of all those working below it was believed that not one could have escaped.

Dick's heart sickened when he heard this. His father, his eldest brother, and his friend, David Adams, were all below. Besides them, he knew all the people working in the pit; men and boys, they

all came before him as he had last seen them, and now not one alive !

“ Oh yes, yes ; surely there must be some who have escaped,” he cried out, when he was told that all had been killed.

The sad news quickly spread, and numbers of women and children came rushing from the village ; wives to ask for their husbands, mothers for their sons, girls for their fathers and brothers, or intended husbands. They kept running about without bonnets or shawls, their hair streaming in the wind, and frantically crying as they stretched out their hands to the banksman and viewers and other officers, “ Where are they ? where are they ? Why don’t they come up ? ” It would have softened the hardest heart to have seen the grief, the agony of the poor women. No one could answer them. It was not the first time such a thing had happened, even in that pit. They all knew too well the effect of the fire-damp, and still more destructive choke-damp.

“ Is no one going down to bring them up ? ” was the question next asked.

“ Yes, some one will go, I dare say, as soon as it’s safe ; but it would not do to go yet,” answered the banksman. “ Besides, the gear is knocked to pieces.”

This reply only increased the alarm of the poor women, but they were obliged to be content with it.

Dick pressed forward, and asked if any one had come up. No ; no one had come up since the morning.

“ Then, may I go down ? ” he asked of one of the viewers.

“ You are the lad who went by yourself to look for the boy Adams some years ago, when he was lost, I remember,” answered the viewer. “ Yes, you shall go with me presently, if you wish it.”

A fresh corve was fitted, and the gear put in order. The viewer stepped in, there were two other volunteers. Dick followed. Each person had a safety lamp in his hand. They went down very slowly, for it was probable that the shaft itself might be injured. They had not got far when a stream of water, which had burst out of the side, came pouring down on them, and almost filled the corve. The rushing sound, and the force with which the water fell, deafened and confused them. Still they persevered. Hot air, and noxious vapours, and steam, and smoke came rushing up. They went down through it all. Some of their fellow-creatures might be below. They would save them if they could. At last they reached the bottom of the shaft. The furnace was still blazing away. Beyond all was darkness and gloom, though the pale light of their lamps showed them the ruin caused by the explosion.

The viewer shouted out, “ Is any one alive ? ”

They stopped and listened anxiously. There was a faint cry, which came from not far off.

“ I heard a groan also,” said the viewer. “ There may be several alive, I hope.”

The brave little band moved on, knowing well that each step they advanced the danger was increased.

“ Here is a poor fellow,” cried the viewer, who was looking into a hollow cut in the wall. Dick hoped that

it might be his father or brother, but it was a man he knew little about. He was alive, but hurt from having been blown into the place where he was found, and appeared to have lost his senses. He was carried to the foot of the shaft and placed in the corve. Two other men crawled up on hearing the shout, but they were very weak, and could only say that they believed all the rest were killed.

The overseer told Dick that he might go up with them, but he begged so hard to remain that he might look for his father, that two men were sent instead.

While the overseer was securing the men in the corve, Dick once more went along the main gallery. He had not gone far when he saw in a hollow, a figure crouching down. It was that of his friend David Adams. Was he alive? He lifted him up and carried him along in his arms towards the shaft. Already he felt the choke-damp in his throat; he was stumbling, too, with the weight of his burden. He felt that he could not move another yard, for his knees were bending under him.

“Run, run to the shaft,” he heard a voice say. “I’ll take him on.” It was the viewer, who, throwing the body of young Adams over his shoulders, seized Dick with the other hand and dragged him on. Their companion had disappeared. In vain they shouted for him, while they anxiously waited for the return of the corve to carry them up. To go back into the passages already full of poisonous air, would have been madness. Dick, notwithstanding, was eager to go back to try and find his father and

brother. Had not the viewer prevented him, he would have made the attempt and perished. Even where they were, it was with difficulty they breathed.

Dick, as he looked at his friend's face, calm and quiet, was afraid that he had lost him too. At last the corve came down, and the viewer and Dick lifting in David's body, were drawn up.

Poor Mrs. Adams was among those in the front surrounding the pit. She at once knew her son, and clasping him in her arms, gave way to her grief, calling him to come to life.

"Let the doctor see him, dame," said several voices. "May be he is not so far gone as you think."

On this the surgeon stepped forward and had David carried out of the crowd, who prevented him from breathing the fresh air, which, if a person is not dead, is more likely than anything else to restore the power of breathing.

Meantime Mrs. Kempson, among the other women, had come up.

"Oh! my husband! my husband! where is he? Dick, my boy, have you found your father and Tom? Where is your brother, boy?" Such were the questions asked by numbers of the unhappy women.

Dick could only shake his head and burst into tears.

From the report of the viewer, the engineers declared that it would be dangerous to go down the pit again till the ventilation was set to rights, and that all hope of finding any of those below still alive was gone.

CHAPTER VII.

THERE was deep sorrow and tears and groans in the mining village of Wallford that night. Those who had gone forth to their work in the morning in health and spirits, the bread-winners of the family, were never to return. The widows and orphans sorrowed for husbands and fathers, and it was natural that they should sorrow for themselves.

Among those who had good cause to look forward with dread to the future, was Mrs. Kempson, and yet she did not fear it as once she would have done. She believed that her husband had fully accepted Christ's gracious offer of salvation, and that he was prepared for death; and she also knew that God protects the fatherless and widows who trust in Him. Still she had a good deal to try her faith.

Dick was the only one of the family who could work for their support; he could gain but little, and she trembled when she thought that any day he, too, might be cut off. He, like a good son, was doing his best to comfort her.

"Don't take on so, mother, don't take on so," he said, putting his arm round her neck. "I shall soon be big enough to work as a hewer, and you shan't want while I can earn good wages, and God will look after us all. Don't fear, mother, don't fear."

Dick had not forgotten his friend David, but, while attending to his mother, he had had no time to ask about him. He now said that he would go out to see Mrs. Adams, and learn if he had recovered.

Dick looked in at Mrs. Adams's open window. It was a comfort to him in his own sorrow to see his friend sitting up, though looking very ill. He felt inclined to go away again without speaking, but Mrs. Adams saw him, and, coming out, brought him in.

"You have saved my boy's life twice, Dick," she exclaimed. "I can't thank you enough, and never can. But David and I and all of us can pray for you. God will reward you. He will bless you."

There had been cries and shrieks and tears on the day of the explosion. A still sadder day was that when, the mine being put in order, the bodies were brought up from below, and the poor women came round to claim their husbands and sons.

It was difficult to recognise some of the bodies, but the full number of those who had been working in the pit were found, and hope left the hearts of those who had trusted till now that by some means those they loved had escaped.

Dick set to work as soon as the pit was open, and toiled on bravely; still all his wages could only just support his mother and brothers and sisters.

Bad times came too, made bad by the folly of the people themselves. The men in some of the collieries made up their minds that they would get higher wages. They banded themselves together, and tried to make the people of all the collieries in the district join them. When David and Dick heard of it, they agreed that they were content with their wages, and that all the men about them were well off, and that they would go on working without grumbling.

They had not their choice, however. There was a general strike of the labourers underground and above ground throughout the whole district, and the pits were closed. They, and others who had not joined the league, were threatened with severe punishment if they offered to work.

Mrs. Kempson and Mrs. Adams and many other widows were in a sad way. They had saved but little money, so they soon spent all they had. Then they had to pawn some of their things, and then they had to go on credit, hoping that the lads would soon go to work again. Food was running very short. They could barely afford bread and cheese; often they ate nothing but dry bread and drank warm water, for the tea was so weak it was little better.

Mrs. Kempson, who had for so long lived well, felt as if she was dying of hunger. Dick was pretty nearly starving also. He had not been idle though, as had most of the people, for he had been hard at work making all sorts of models.

“I’ll take them to Newcastle, to-morrow. May be I’ll get something for them, mother, and bring back food for you and the rest; if not, I’ll look out for some other sort of work. I’m determined to be at play no longer, to please any set of men.”

The miners always speak of being at play, when they are not at work.

Just then a young man, well dressed in seafaring style, passed the window.

“Do any people of the name of Kempson live hereabouts?” Dick heard him say.

“Yes, sir,” said Dick. “That’s our name. What do you want?”

The young man made no answer, but walked in and sat down on a chair Mrs. Kempson offered him. He looked round for a minute without speaking—first at Mrs. Kempson, then at Limping Lawry, then at little Nelly, and then at the other children, and over and over again at Dick.

“I think that I have seen you all before ; but it was years ago,” he said at last, and his voice trembled. “Some time back, as I was reading an account of a dreadful accident which happened in one of the coal-pits hereabouts, I saw the name of Samuel Kempson and his son Benjamin among the list of sufferers.”

“Yes, sir ; those were my poor husband and son,” said Mrs. Kempson, with a sigh, and the tears came to her eyes.

“Did you ever live in Suffolk?” asked the stranger.

“Yes, sir ; and I wish that we had never left it,” answered Susan.

“And had you a son you called Jack?” inquired the visitor.

“Yes, I had ; I had a fine hearty boy, but he went away to sea, and I fear has long since been drowned,” cried Susan, lifting her apron to her eyes.

“I don’t think so,” answered the stranger. “Do you think that you should know him again?”

“I’m sure I should, my own bright boy. Oh ! speak, young man. Who are you ? Don’t deceive me,” exclaimed Susan, starting up and taking the stranger’s hands. “Are you my son Jack?”

“ Indeed I am, mother,” answered Jack Kempson, for the young stranger was her long-lost son.

He returned her embrace affectionately, and soon all his young brothers and sisters were clustering round him. He had heard of the strike, and of the state of affairs, and guessing that provisions would be welcome, before he could talk further, went out with Dick and got a good supply for supper.

While the family were seated round a better meal than they had had for many a day, he told them how he had gone to sea in a collier running between Newcastle and London; how he then had sailed to far distant lands; how once, when ill-treated by the master, he had made up his mind to quit the sea and had come to look out for work in the mines; how he soon saw that he should not change for the better.

“ Yes, we know the widow woman you spoke to, and she told us all about the sailor lad, who had come, thinking to get work, and had gone off again.”

“ That is strange,” cried Dick, “ that we should have been so near, and not have seen each other.” “ Well, I went back to the ship,” continued Jack, “ and I made up my mind to stick to the sea. I was soon afterwards made second mate, and then first mate; and a year ago, in a foreign voyage, the captain, who was given to drink, fell overboard, and I brought the ship home, and the owners were so pleased that they made me captain. I am now bound back to London, and though I say it’s generally best for every man to stick to the trade he is brought up in; yet as the people here won’t let Dick work in it, I want him

and you all to come away with me. You cannot be worse off, and you may be much better ; and at all events, I have enough wages to keep you all comfortable."

Poor Mrs. Kempson thankfully accepted her son's offer. A good and affectionate son he proved. Dick was well pleased to change, but he could not make up his mind to part from David Adams.

"I will take him and his mother and the rest of them too," said the generous sailor. "I have saved money, and cannot spend it better than in helping the widow and orphan. I dare say we shall find some place in the old county where our mother and Mrs. Adams can settle down among green fields, and where you may find work for which you are suited."

As soon as supper was over, Mrs. Kempson and Jack and Dick set off to visit Mrs. Adams. Dick had put up a basket full of provisions—bread and butter, and cheese, and herrings, and tea and sugar, and other things which he well knew from experience would be welcome. "This is doing to others as I would be done by, or indeed as I have been done by," he thought. "Yes, God has been very merciful to us—just when we were well-nigh starved, and now Jack come to life again !"

Mrs. Adams was very grateful for the good food Dick had brought. She did not at first remember Jack, but he soon convinced her who he was. Great was her joy when the generous young sailor offered to carry her and David and the rest of her children to the neighbourhood of her old home.

“But I can never, never repay you, young man,” she said.

“Never mind that,” answered Jack, unconsciously looking upwards, “Some one else will.”

A happy party sailed down the river Tyne on board the brig, *Good Hope*, bound for the Thames. The young captain was as good as his word. Little Nelly was sent to an institution, where she was very happy, and was taught to do many useful things. Limping Lawry went to another, where he recovered his strength, and learned to gain his daily bread; and Dick and David got employment as engineers; and in a few years Dick rose to be foreman of some extensive works, with his old friend as his assistant.

